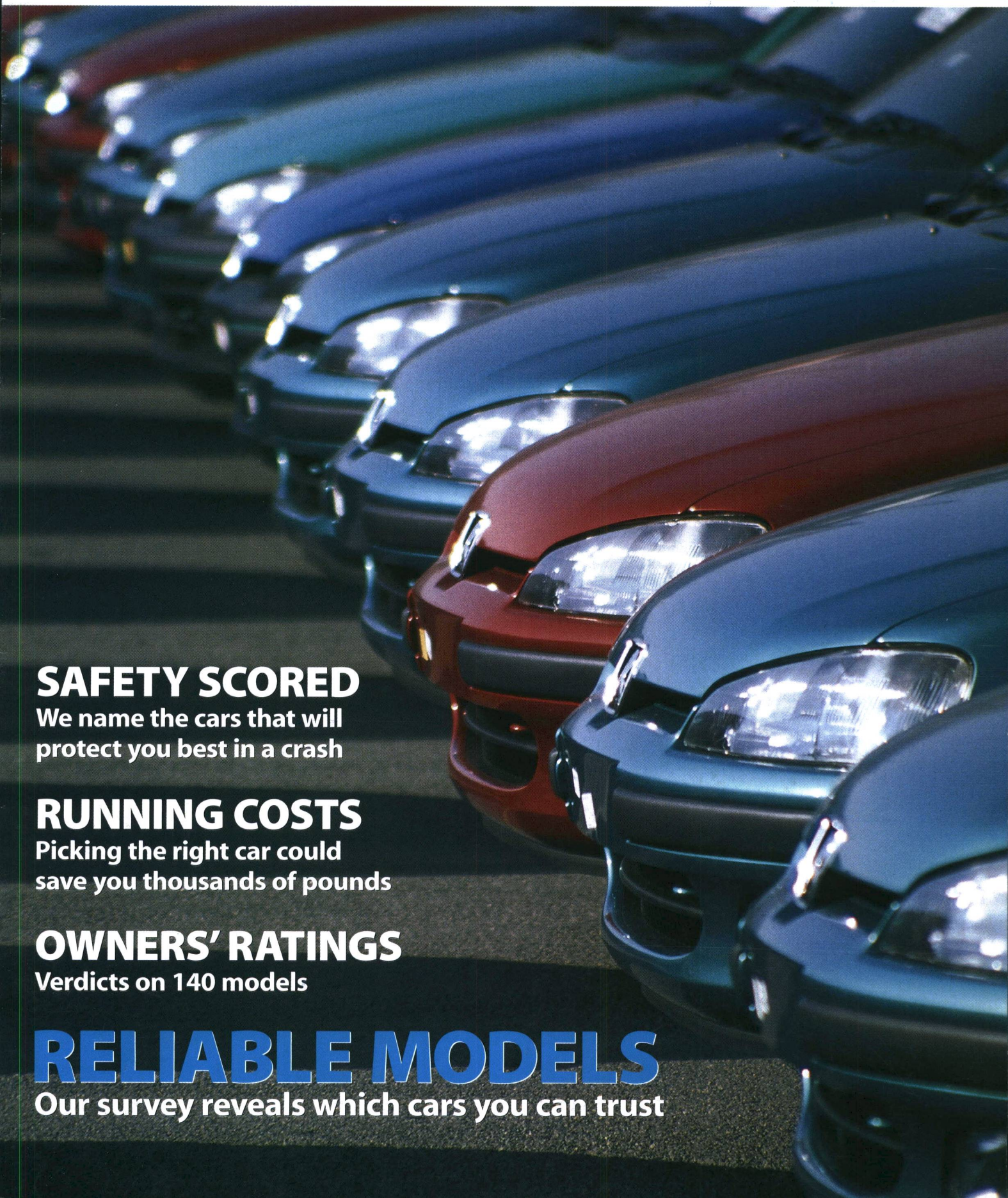
WHICH? CAR 2002

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUYING A NEW OR USED CAR



SAFETY SCORED

We name the cars that will protect you best in a crash

RUNNING COSTS

Picking the right car could save you thousands of pounds

OWNERS' RATINGS

Verdicts on 140 models

RELIABLE MODELS

Our survey reveals which cars you can trust

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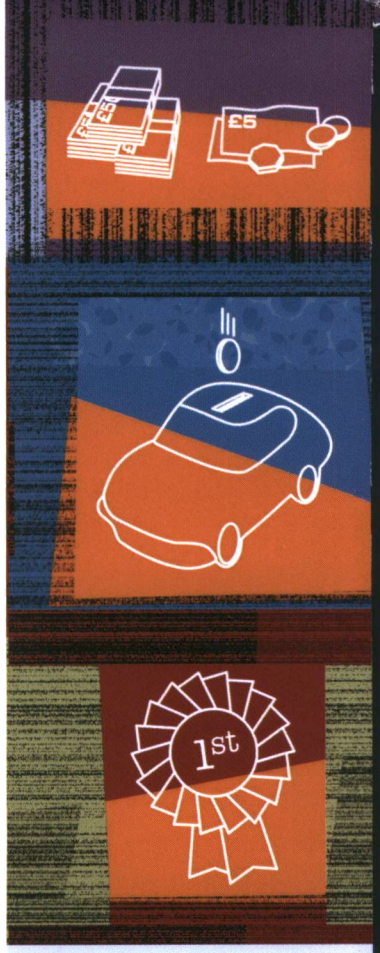

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BEST BUYS

Whether small and economical or large and luxurious, we have recommended models that suit most pockets

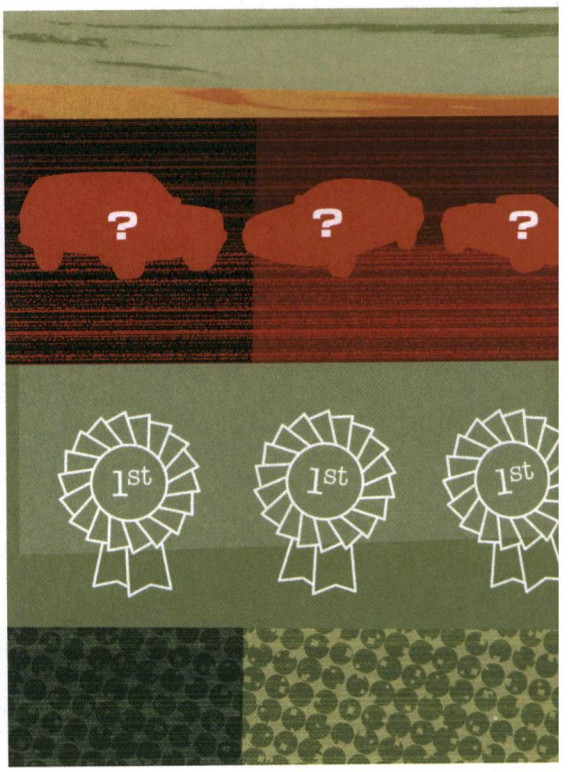
We've chosen cars that we recommend in six classes of car, from superminis to luxury cars. The class that the cars in *Which? Car* fall into depends mostly on their size, but also on the engine sizes, their price, and their key competitors.

To choose Best Buys, we first look at reliability. Our Best Buys mustn't have any below-average ratings for breakdowns, problems or fault (see 'Reliability rated', p16, for how the ratings work).

Second, we look at owners' opinions of their cars, and that they don't get a below-average overall rating (though, of course, all cars have good and bad points – the 'Owners' verdicts' section of the model summaries lists these).

Finally, we make sure that Best Buy candidates are up with class standards for protection in a crash and for how well they deter a thief.

For some models, we don't have enough information to make them a Best Buy. Alternatively, they may have one or two drawbacks. These are our 'worth considering' cars.



LUXURY CARS

SAAB 9-5

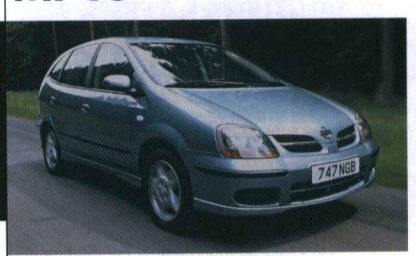
WORTH CONSIDERING There's no overall Best Buy luxury car this year as all of the leading contenders have their own foibles. Owners rate their **Saab 9-5**s highly, and it's one of the cheapest cars in this class to run.

You couldn't call the **Jaguar XJ** roomy in the back, and it's expensive to run, even for a luxury car, but still owners love their XJs. And it's looking better for reliability this year, too. Lack of space is an issue with the **Jaguar S-type**, too, but safety and security standards are impressive.

Safety and security are the **Volvo S80**'s strongest suits and owners are generally impressed with their cars. Last year's Best Buy, the **Mercedes-Benz E-class** has just been replaced by a new model, but the superseded one is still a good nearly-new choice.

MPVs

NISSAN ALMERA TINO



WORTH CONSIDERING It's another disappointing year for MPVs – yet again, there are no models we can recommend wholeheartedly.

If you need a car with only seats for five, the **Nissan Almera Tino** looks to be the best bet, as it scores well for safety and security.

If you need more space (and room for seven people), consider the **Toyota Avensis Verso**, which has replaced a former recommended model, the Toyota Picnic. It scores highly for safety but it's too new for us to have reliability or owner satisfaction ratings. However, Toyota's long-standing excellent reliability record means that the car is likely to be trouble-free.

OFF-ROADERS

TOYOTA RAV4

WORTH CONSIDERING There's no Best Buy here, as these cars are more for show than serious mud-plugging. However, the two that stand out are the **Honda CR-V** and the **Toyota RAV4**. The CR-V has just been replaced, but the old model was very highly rated, so the new one is worth a look. Space in the back isn't a strong point of the RAV4, but otherwise owners are very impressed with their cars.

SUPERMINIS

TOYOTA YARIS

FORD FIESTA

BEST BUYS If you want a car that's safe, reliable and rated highly by owners, you might think you'd need to look at something a bit bigger than a supermini. But with the **Toyota Yaris**, you can have all this, and it retains the Best Buy supermini crown this year with ease.

WORTH CONSIDERING We don't have reliability data for the new **Ford Fiesta** yet, but we have tested it for safety and security and it impressed us in both areas. The old-shape Fiesta is looking reliable, too, so things seem promising for the new model.

The **Renault Clio** is a good all-rounder and scores well for safety and security. Reliability is average. The smaller **Ford Ka** doesn't offer class-leading levels of safety and is only available with three doors, but it's reliable and is highly rated by owners.

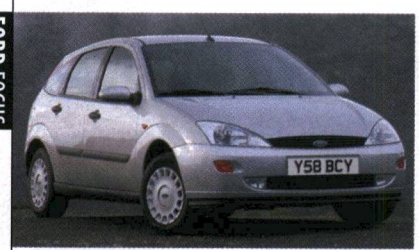
CHEAPER CHOICES **Ford Fiesta** (1995 to 2002) £2,400 to £8,300, **Ford Ka** from £3,100, **Nissan Micra** from £2,000 , **Peugeot 206** from £4,900, **Toyota Starlet** £2,900 to £5,600

CHEAPER CHOICES

If your budget doesn't quite run to a new car, we've chosen some less expensive models, most of which are available only secondhand. Our 'cheaper choices' cars have all done well in our reliability survey, and are available for around £5,000 (depending on their age). For each model listed, we give the typical dealer price range, for cars with average mileage – expect to pay less if you buy privately.

MEDIUM CARS

FORD FOCUS



HONDA CIVIC

BEST BUYS The **Ford Focus** impresses in all of the key areas and becomes a Best Buy this year. The only possible fly in the ointment is Ford dealers. Ford owners rated them poorly for servicing and repairs and customer care.

The **Honda Civic** has good standards of safety and security and is reliable. Owners are particularly impressed by the amount of space in the back but criticise the cost of servicing and spare parts.

WORTH CONSIDERING The latest **Toyota Corolla** is too new for us to have reliability information but given Toyota's track record, it's unlikely to cause any grief. It certainly gets the thumbs up from our testers for safety. The pricey **Audi A3** is surprisingly cheap to run despite its high list price, thanks to low depreciation. It's one of the most highly rated cars in its class, too. The **Seat Leon** is mechanically similar to the Audi but has a different body, and costs a lot less. It too is highly rated by its owners.

If standing out in the crowd is more important to you than space for your passengers, then look no further than the **VW Beetle**. As well as satisfied owners, it boasts class-leading safety and security.

CHEAPER CHOICES **Ford Escort/Orion** (1990 to 2000, petrol models only) up to £6,800, **Honda Civic** (1995 to 2000) £3,400 to £10,300, **Nissan Almera** (1995 to 2000) £2,900 to £6,500, **Toyota Corolla** (1992 to 1997) £2,500 to £5,500, **Toyota Corolla** (1997 to 2002) from £3,900 to £9,300

LARGE CARS

HONDA ACCORD

BMW 3-SERIES

BEST BUYS The **Honda Accord** is a Best Buy again this year, as it's a very impressive all-rounder. Owners' only gripes are to do with getting in and out and the car's thirst for fuel. At the prestige end of this class, the **Lexus IS200/300** range keeps its crown, and is joined this year by the **BMW 3-series** and the **Mercedes-Benz C-class**. All three are highly rated by owners and offer good levels of safety and security. The Mercedes has higher running costs than the others, though.

WORTH CONSIDERING The **Audi A4** isn't a Best Buy, despite high ratings from owners, because the previous A4 range is beginning to prove unreliable. The new version, currently average for reliability, will have to prove itself over a longer period to get an unreserved thumbs up.

The **Rover 75** is worth a mention due to the high praise it receives from owners.

Other options include the **Skoda Octavia**, which would be in contention as a Best Buy but is let down by poor security. The **Toyota Avensis** is a good all-rounder, although in terms of safety, both these cars trail the best in this class. The **Volvo S60** is worth a mention for its best-in-class secondary safety and good security. But we don't yet know how reliable the S60 is.

CHEAPER CHOICES **Honda Accord** (1993 to 1998) £3,000 to £7,800, **Mazda 626** (1997 to 2002) £3,400 to £9,000, **Nissan Primera** (1996 to 2002) £3,100 to £10,800, **Subaru Legacy** (1994 to 1998) £3,500 to £9,300, **Toyota Avensis** from £4,900, **Toyota Carina E** £2,400 to £5,500

BUYING A NEW CAR

When it comes to buying a new car, you've more choice than ever before. But you still need to shop around for the best deals

Buying a new car is a major financial commitment, so it pays to do your homework to make sure you get the right model for your needs – at the right price for your pocket. Now more than ever, there is a huge range of buying options to pick your way through. We've listed the pros and cons of each to help you make your way sure-footed.

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

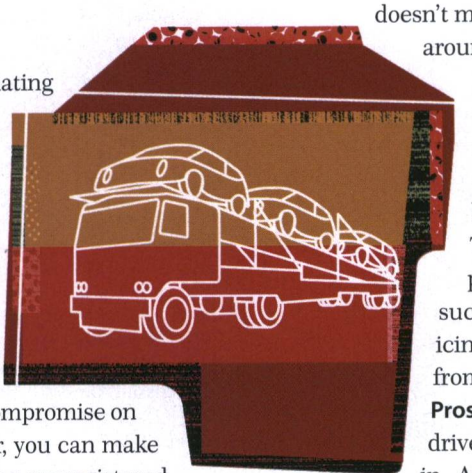
Before even considering how and where to buy, draw up a list of cars you are interested in. Use our Best Buys (on p4) and other information to help narrow your choice, then use the contact details for the major manufacturers on p66 to get hold of brochures and to find local dealers.

Test driving the models that you like the look of is essential. Try to arrange an extended test drive with a local dealer so you can try driving the car in the situations where you will normally use it. Make sure that the model you test drive has the same engine size and fuel type as the one you are thinking of buying – whatever a dealer might say, a different engine can make a big difference.

After your test drive, the dealer might offer you a tempting deal, but make it clear that you are still shopping around.

WHERE TO BUY?

The basic rule of negotiating for your new car is never to pay the manufacturer's 'list' price. The only time you might need to do this is if you are going for an unusual or newly launched model that is in short supply.



If you are willing to compromise on buying a brand new car, you can make big savings by opting for a preregistered car instead. These cars usually only have delivery mileage on the clock, and buying one means you avoid some of the heavy depreciation that occurs in the first few months of a car's life.

The number of people arranging to import a car into the UK themselves has risen in recent years, and car supermarkets and brokers now frequently offer car-importing services alongside their more traditional business.

We searched the internet to see what sort of savings we could get on a popular car (a Ford Focus 1.8i Zetec) and also a pricier model (a BMW X5 4.4i Sport). The best quote we obtained for the Focus (£9,475 plus on-the-road costs) was from a garage in Calais. Its price represented a saving of 25 per cent on the UK list price of £12,580. The best price we got for a full import service was £10,711.

A personal import was also the cheapest quote for the BMW X5 (9.3 per cent off the list price of £44,490), but a fully managed import could be obtained from an internet broker with savings of 8.1 per cent off the list price.

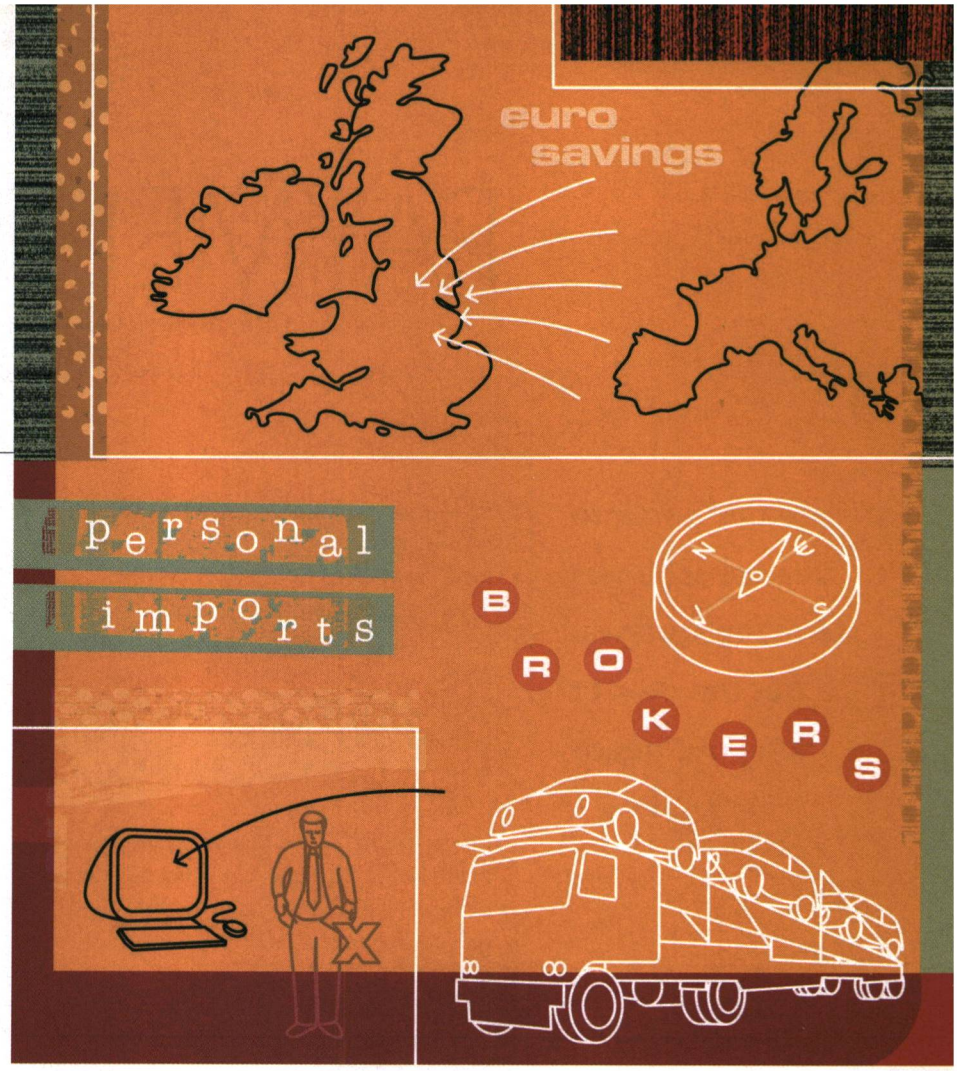
When considering importing, take your time deciding which company to use. Find out as much as you can about the company, and obtain testimonials from satisfied customers.

UK DEALERS

Dealer prices have continued to drop in the past 12 months, with prices on average 2.9 per cent lower than they were in 2001. But this doesn't mean you won't have to shop around and bargain to get a good deal. Sometimes the basic cost of the car can be confused by a dealer offering extras which you might not be especially interested in. Try to negotiate the best price first and treat extras such as free equipment, servicing and cash-back separately from discounts.

Pros You can look over and test drive models you are interested in. And if you want to buy, you may be able to drive the car away immediately. Also, you can trade in your old car (although bear in mind that you will probably get more for it if you sell it privately).

Cons Mostly the highest prices.



PERSONAL IMPORTS

Importing from elsewhere in Europe is now a tried and tested option, and there is plenty of information on how to do it. Start by getting the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's personal import pack (call 0870 240 0010).

When trying to import a car, some people still face problems of prohibitively high right-hand-drive surcharges and long delivery times (despite these being against EU law). On the more positive side, direct price comparisons should be easier now with the introduction of the euro in much of Continental Europe.

When negotiating with a dealer overseas, get everything in writing, from the full vehicle specification to delivery dates and financial terms. If possible, pay the deposit with a credit card, as this will give you extra protection if anything goes wrong with the deal.

Pros Potentially the biggest savings.

Cons Importing can take a lot of time and effort – you have to go and collect the car from overseas. There may be language difficulties, too. Price comparisons can be tricky because specifications (and warranty periods) can vary from one European country to another. Also, currency fluctuations may mean the final price might be different from what you expected. Finally, your finance options can be limited.

IMPORT AGENTS

Companies that take the hassle out of importing a car have proliferated in recent years. But the recent collapse of some companies has emphasised the importance of knowing who you are dealing with – check that the company is bona fide and will not disappear with your money. In particular, make sure that your deposit and final payments are banked separately from the company's own accounts.

Pros There is the potential for big savings, and you don't have the hassle of having to collect your car from abroad.

Cons Delivery times can be long. It can be difficult to work out what services are included (or excluded) in different companies' importing services.Trade-in prices for old cars are often lower than those offered by dealers.

BROKERS

Car brokers act as intermediaries between private buyers and manufacturers. They buy in bulk, then sell the cars at a discount. Most brokers supply UK-sourced cars, but some also import cars, too.

Pros Prices are better than dealer prices, and you don't have to haggle. In most cases, cars have a UK specification, so it is easy to compare prices with dealers' quotes.

Cons You might have to travel a long way (within the UK) to collect your car, and, as with import agents, you have to check that the broker is genuine.

CAR SUPERMARKETS

Car supermarkets often buy up stock that manufacturers can't shift. The cars may be brand new or preregistered, with very few miles on the clock. Supermarkets may also sell a range of newly imported cars, or nearly-new cars, such as ex-rental models.

Pros Prices are competitive. You can inspect and test drive cars, and drive one away there and then if you want to. Most car supermarkets offer finance, too.

Cons You may not be able to find unusual or sought-after models. You might have to travel some distance to find the car you want. Prices are usually non-negotiable.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Use our guide to finance schemes to make sure you get the deal to suit your needs

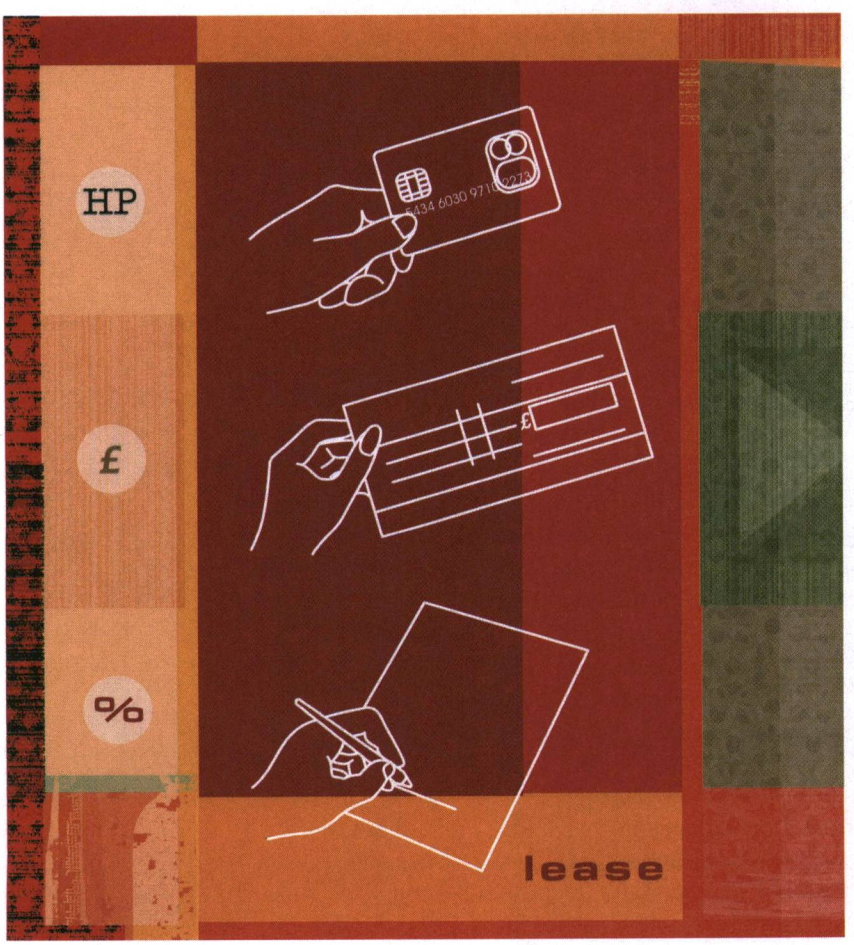
These days almost every retailer that will sell you a car will also offer you finance to buy it with.

There is a wide range of options and products to choose from, some of which can be difficult to understand. To help you narrow your options, we have outlined all the popular ways to finance a car purchase.

CASH

Being able to pay upfront with cold, hard cash might be the simplest way to buy, but you could be missing a trick. By taking advantage of a 0 per cent finance deal, you could pay your deposit, then collect interest on the balance until the end of the free finance period.

But be warned: if you fail to make the final payment by the due date, you may face penalty charges, which can be considerable.



PERSONAL FINANCE

A bank or building society loan is a good option if you want to own your car outright, or if you don't have enough cash for the deposit you would need for dealer finance. There is fierce competition among banks, building societies and other lenders for your business, so shop around for the best rates.

Unsecured personal loan With a personal loan, the period is fixed at the outset and your monthly payments cover the loan plus interest. Interest rates on unsecured personal loans vary according to your circumstances and the amount you borrow. You will need an unblemished credit history to get the best rates.

Car purchase loan Car purchase loans are similar to unsecured personal loans, but they take into account the fact that your car will have some value at the end of the loan period. This means that you benefit from lower instalments during the loan period, because you defer paying off a large chunk of the loan.

At the end of the loan term, you can either pay the balance and keep the car; sell the car and pay the balance with the proceeds; or take out a second loan to pay the balance. But whichever option you choose, you pay interest on the whole amount borrowed.

Credit card If your credit limit is high enough, a new credit card could provide you with the borrowing power you need for your car purchase. Many card issuers have low introductory interest offers (usually for the first six months) that can work out cheaper than a personal loan – see 'Cut your card costs', *Which?*, June 2002, p46, to get an idea of the best standard and introductory rates.

Bear in mind that some retailers charge a fee of 1 or 2 per cent if you choose to pay by credit card – on a large purchase, this can increase the cost significantly.

DEALER FINANCE

By providing finance for your car, dealers can increase the profits that they make from selling you a car. Most dealers offer hire purchase (HP) and personal contract plans. Personal leasing (contract hire) plans for private buyers

are also available from some dealers.

Dealer finance interest rates are higher than personal finance rates. As we went to press, typical APRs were 12 to 14 per cent, compared with 8 to 10 per cent for the best personal loans.

Hire purchase (HP) With an HP agreement, you pay an initial deposit (usually at least 10 per cent), then pay the remainder, with interest, in monthly instalments. The finance company owns the car until you make the final payment, so it's not yours to sell until the HP has been settled. The interest you are charged can vary depending on how much deposit you put down and the duration of the contract, so work out whether the amount you pay each month or the total cost of the loan is more important to you.

Personal contract plan (PCP) PCPs work a bit like car purchase loans, but with a hire purchase element. Like HP, you pay a deposit and you don't own the car until the final payment is made. However, you can defer a large part of the loan until the end of the contract, which reduces your monthly payments. However, as with a loan, you pay interest on the whole amount.

When the plan begins, you are offered a 'minimum guaranteed future value' (MGFV) for your car, which is subject to agreed mileage limits and the car being in a good condition at the end of the contract period. The MGFV is at least equal to the deferred lump sum.

You have three options at the end of the repayment period.

- Pay the deferred amount and keep the car (but PCPs are an expensive way to buy a car, because the interest rates are usually higher than those of bank loans).
- Sell the car (to someone other than the original dealer) and use the proceeds to pay the balance and end the deal.
- Hand the car back to the dealer as the final payment. But if you have exceeded the pre-set mileage limit, or if the car isn't in good condition, you will have to pay an extra charge.

The MGFV set by the finance company is a crucial factor in a PCP. If it is too low, your monthly payments will not be much less than with HP. If it is too high, you might not be able to sell the car for more than the MGFV, so unless you just hand it back to the dealer, you will have to find extra money to settle the finance (or to be used as the deposit for your next car).

Used car prices have plummeted in recent years, and there have also been record levels of new car registrations. In a couple of years time, there could be a glut of used cars. For this reason, any finance that relies on predicting future values will work best for those brands that depreciate least, like Audi, Mercedes-Benz, BMW and Volkswagen.

PERSONAL LEASING

Dealers are anticipating that with the recent changes in company car tax rules, personal leasing plans will become increasingly popular. With these plans you do not own the car. Instead, you make fixed monthly payments to use it for a specified period. Some schemes cover running costs like servicing, breakdown cover and road tax, too. As with PCPs, you might incur penalty charges if you exceed the agreed mileage, or if the car is not in an acceptable condition when you hand it back.

LEASE PURCHASE

This scheme, which has become less popular in recent years, is aimed at business users who can claim back VAT on payments, rather than private buyers. You have to pay a deposit and a deferred lump sum at the end of the contract. However, unlike a PCP, there is no fixed valuation guarantee for the car, so you bear the risk that the value of the car at the end of the loan may not cover what you owe.

NOTES

We've taken the example of a Mazda MX-5 1.8 with a list price £17,495 to show how costs for different payment options compare. Our figures are based on schemes that run over three years. The **deposit** is the amount you pay upfront (in the case of cash, the full cost). **Fees** are one-off administrative costs you pay with some schemes. Some schemes have a **final payment** that you pay at the end of the three years in order to buy the car. The **APR** is the typical annual percentage rate in June 2002.

PAYMENT OPTIONS COMPARED

PAYMENT METHOD	Deposit (£)	Monthly instalment (£)	Fees (£)	Final payment (£)	Total cost (£)	APR (%)
Cash	17,495	0	0	0	**17,495**	0
Unsecured personal loan	0	552	0	0	**19,855**	8.7
Hire purchase	4,374	436	145	0	**20,118**	12.9
Personal contract plan	2,624	286	120	7,873	**20,803**	9.9
Car purchase loan	0	382	0	7,000	**20,739**	8.9
Personal leasing[1]	1,035	341	35	–	**12,972**	11.9
Lease purchase	405	370	35	9,029	**22,334**	11.9

1 With leasing, you are not buying the car – you do not own it at the end of the payment period

BUYING A USED CAR

Buying a used car can save you a lot of money, but it's not without risks. Our guide will help minimise your chances of being taken for a ride

The heavy depreciation on most new cars, coupled with improving reliability and rust resistance, makes buying a second-hand car more attractive than ever.

High levels of new car sales in the early part of this year have been accompanied by plummeting used car prices, so there are plenty of opportunities for bargain hunting.

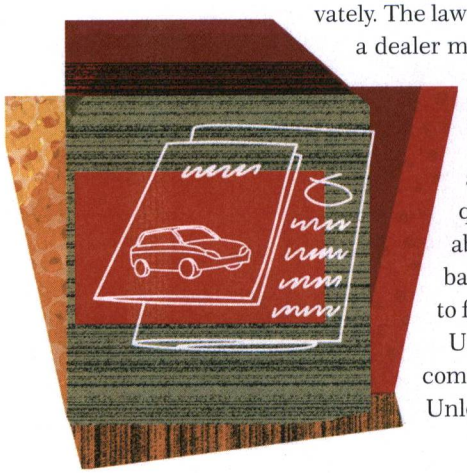
THE BUYING OPTIONS

The internet puts a vast amount of information about the used car marketplace at your fingertips. With a bit of searching, you can find depreciation projections, comparative car valuations, and track down your ideal car. But when it comes down to doing a deal, there are still three main ways to buy used cars, each with its own pros and cons.

Dealer Dealers are usually the most expensive option. They range from franchised dealers, selling fairly new, low-mileage, manufacturer-warranted cars, to small independent car lots, selling a range of cheaper vehicles. Increasingly, dealers have their own websites where you can search through their stock.

Car supermarkets are no-nonsense places, which treat cars much like any other commodity. They sell a wide range of vehicles at competitive prices (though haggling is often not an option). Many car supermarkets have websites where you can search the stock and leave requests for information on incoming stock (see 'Contacts', p66, for some websites to try).

Whatever the type of dealership, you have stronger legal rights buying this way than privately. The law says that a car sold by a dealer must be 'of satisfactory quality', 'fit for its purpose' and 'as described'. If it's not, as long as you act quickly, you should be able to get your money back, or compensation to fix the problem.



Used cars may also come with a warranty. Unless it's a nearly-new car with the remainder of a manufacturer's warranty left, these 'warranties' are normally just mechanical breakdown insurance (MBI) policies, which cover your car only for certain problems and parts, and often have long lists of exclusions (see 'The warranty maze', *Which?*, March 2002, p34). Remember that a warranty doesn't affect your legal rights.

Private seller Buying privately is usually cheaper, but you have fewer legal rights. Legally, a car must be correctly described, but if the seller lies about it (for example, if they tell you it has only had 'one lady owner' when it hasn't), your only option is to sue them, which can be complicated and risky.

Some dealers pretend to be private sellers to avoid their legal obligations, so when scanning adverts, look for recurring phone numbers, or adverts with only a mobile number.

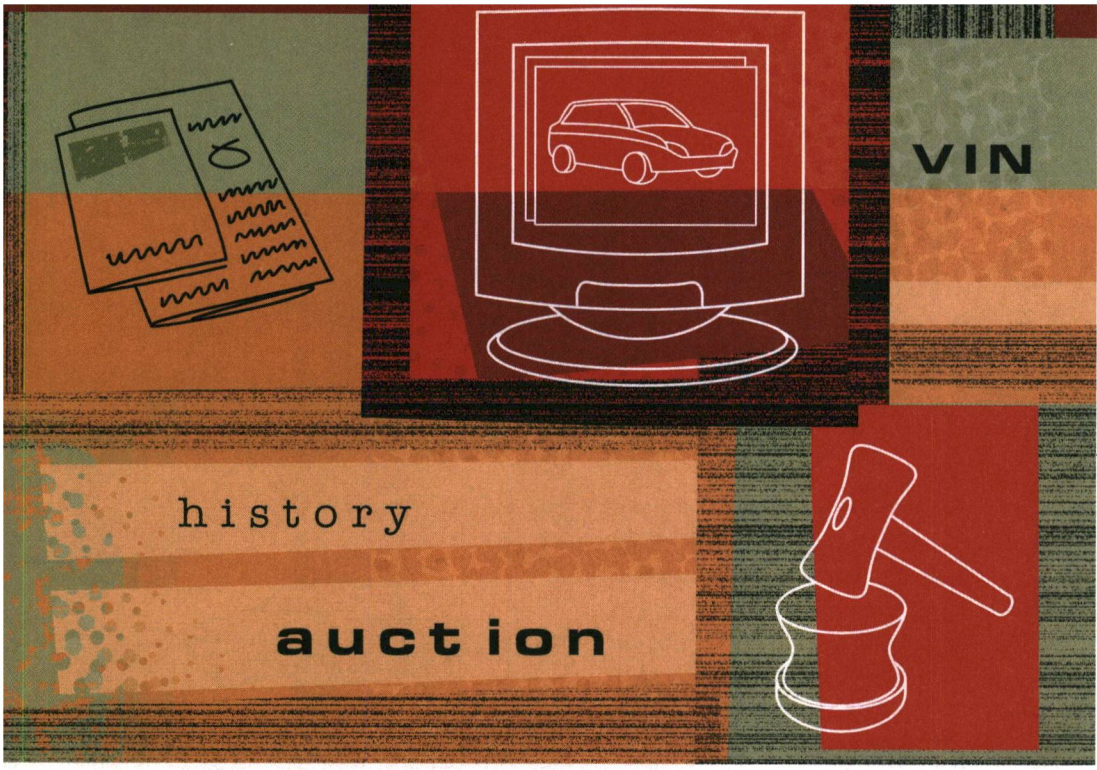
Trading papers and magazines, such as *Auto Trader*, *Exchange & Mart* and *Loot*, are a good place to find sellers. 'Contacts', p66, also has a list of used-car classified websites, but don't forget to check local newspapers, too.

Auction Buying at auction is the riskiest option, but there are real bargains if you know what you're doing. You won't get a chance to check a car you are interested in thoroughly before you buy, though it is worth watching it being driven into the auction hall.

Your usual legal rights won't apply if the auctioneer issues a disclaimer such as 'sold as seen', and you often have very limited time to reject a car. Check the terms and conditions of the auction house to find out what kind of deal you are entering into when you buy. Try to find an auction house that belongs to the Society of Motor Auctions. Its code of practice and arbitration and conciliation service offers some protection if a car turns out to be a real dud.

PAY THE RIGHT PRICE

There are now plenty of sources of information about second-hand car prices. Many motoring magazines have used-car values, and *Parker's Car Price Guide* has more comprehensive price and specification information. Some have online versions, too.



CHECK OUT THE CAR

The main problem with buying a second-hand car is making sure it's in good condition. As more new cars come with a three-year warranty, it's worth checking whether any faults on a newer car can be fixed under warranty before you buy.

If you're buying privately and you know your way around a car (or you can take someone who does), you can do some simple checks yourself. The Office of Fair Trading has an online guide to help with this (see www.oft.gov.uk/consumer).

Alternatively, you can pay someone to check the car for you. Independent assessors, like Automobile Buyers Services (ABS), motoring organisations and local garages offer mechanical inspections for around £100 to £250. Some inspections will also include a history check (see below), put a value on the car, and estimate the cost of any repairs.

The downside of getting a professional inspection is that it can take a few days to organise, and meanwhile the car may be sold.

HISTORY TESTS

It's not just the condition of the car you need to worry about. If a car you buy is stolen, or has outstanding finance on it, you could lose it. Legally, a stolen car belongs to the original owner, even if you've bought it unwittingly.

For around £30 to £40, you can get a car history check, which compares the car's registration and vehicle identification number (VIN) against lists of cars that are stolen, insurance write-offs, have finance outstanding or have had number plates changed. See 'Contacts', p66, for details of organisations that can do this.

The DVLA offers a premium-rate vehicle check phone service (0906 185 8585), which will confirm a car's date of registration, year of manufacture, engine capacity and colour.

You should also check each of the following.

- **Registration document (V5)** The V5 shows the registered keeper (but not always owner) of the vehicle, and you shouldn't normally buy a car if the seller doesn't have it.

The V5 has the three main numbers that identify a car: the registration mark (as on the numberplate), VIN, and engine number. Check that the numbers on the car itself haven't been tampered with, and that they match those on the V5. If the numbers on the car don't match up, or don't match what's on the V5, the vehicle could be a 'cut and shut' – two written-off cars welded together. Alternatively, it could be a stolen car given another car's identity.

- **Mileage** A few simple checks can help you work out whether the car has been 'clocked' (had its mileometer wound back). Try to contact the previous owners (listed on the V5 registration form) to ask about the car's mileage and condition. Also, use your judgement when inspecting the car – if it hasn't done many miles, the driver's seat, pedals and steering wheel shouldn't be very worn.
- **Other documents** If the car is more than three years old, ask to see the MOT certificate (ask about earlier ones, too – you can use them to check the car's mileage).

But don't rely on an MOT certificate to prove that a car is safe. It doesn't guarantee a car's mechanical condition – it's only a measure of roadworthiness on the day of the test.

Service records are another way to check mileage, so ask to see these, too, but treat them with caution – see 'Case study', right.

CASE STUDY

Scott Valentine was helping his father-in-law buy a used car when they saw what looked like a promising P-registration Vauxhall Vectra advertised in a local paper. It looked clean and test drove well, but Scott, who has driven many company cars himself, became suspicious when he noticed screwholes for a mobile phone bracket in the dashboard.

When pressed, the seller admitted that the car was an ex-fleet vehicle, which made Scott wonder whether the 64,000 miles on the clock were genuine. He checked the logbook and noticed that the recorded mileages had been subtly altered.

Scott organised an HPI history check, and discovered that not only had the car mysteriously lost 40,000 miles from its mileometer, it had also been written off as 'uneconomical to repair' by an insurance company the year before.

Scott and his father-in law walked away from that car. They recommend that anyone who is thinking about buying a used car does a history check on it before handing over their cash.

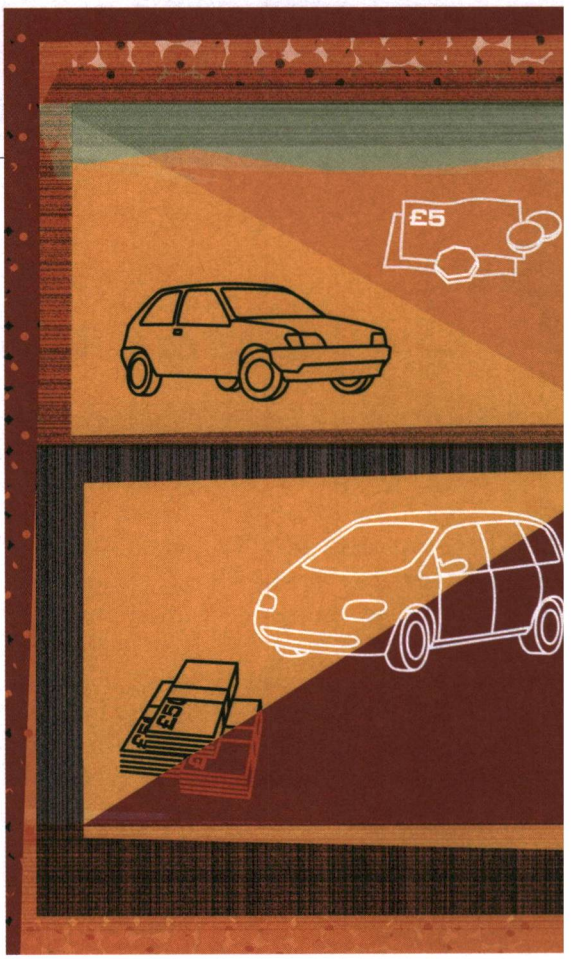
WHAT'S YOUR BUDGET?

For most of us, money-no-object motoring is just a dream. In the real world, a budget is the place most people have to start when choosing a car

We've selected a few examples of what you can get to suit your wallet to give you an indication of the sort of thing you can consider, based on how much you have to spend. Use it, alongside the model summaries (starting on p31), to get some ideas, but remember there are many makers competing for your custom. Once you've worked out what cars you can afford, consider which type of car really meets your needs. Then you can begin narrowing down the field.

NEW OR USED?

The models we've picked tend to come from near the bottom of their specification range, so if you can afford to pay a bit more, you'll probably get more 'bells and whistles'. For new cars, we've assumed full list price, but you should be able to get it cheaper by haggling, or buying abroad, (see 'Buying a new car', p6). For used models, we're usually referring to three-year-old cars with 'average' mileage (around 36,000 miles), unless mentioned otherwise.



AROUND **£4,000**

You can't get a new car for this money and the only nearly new option would be a three-door **Suzuki Alto**.

Three-year-old cars at this price include a **Ford Fiesta 1.2**, **Peugeot 106 1.1** and **Vauxhall Corsa 1.0**. If you need five doors, your money might stretch to a **Daihatsu Cuore**, or a **Fiat Punto**. For more space, a **Proton Persona**, a **Suzuki Wagon R+** or even a **Skoda Felicia Estate** could be worth a look, though these models may be hard to find since they were not big sellers when new.

For a diesel, you'll have to look at older cars. A four-year-old **Citroën ZX**, or a five-year-old **Renault Mégane**, **Rover 220** or **Seat Ibiza** might fit the bill.

SUZUKI ALTO

AROUND **£6,000**

SEAT AROSA

NEW The cheapest cars available are city cars like the **Smart Car** and the **Perodua Kelisa**, or there's one budget small car – the **Kia Rio**. A few other models starting at just over £6,000 include the **Daewoo Matiz**, **Ford Ka** and **Seat Arosa**.

USED £6,000 should buy you a nearly-new supermini, or a three-year-old larger car, such as an **Alfa Romeo 146**, a basic **Ford Focus** or a **Mazda 323**. For a bit more space, an old-shape **Ford Mondeo**, a **Nissan Primera** estate or, if you want a diesel, a **Renault Kangoo** could be worth a look. For more goodies, a two-year-old **Mitsubishi Carisma** should be within reach or, for something sportier, a five-year-old **Subaru Impreza**.

AROUND **£8,000**

NEW A few more superminis and a few small family cars are available at this price level. Superminis include the **Nissan Micra**, **Rover 25**, **Seat Ibiza** and even a five-door **Toyota Yaris**. Medium-sized cars include models from budget brands, such as the **Daewoo Lanos**, **Hyundai Accent** and **Proton Wira**.

USED Many more superminis and small cars are available for this kind of money, though if you want a premium brand model, such as an **Audi A3** or **Mercedes A-class**, you'll have to accept a four- or five-year-old model. And your money should run to a 2-litre version of a larger saloon or hatchback, like a **Honda Accord** or **Vauxhall Vectra**.

NISSAN MICRA

AROUND **£10,000**

SKODA OCTAVIA

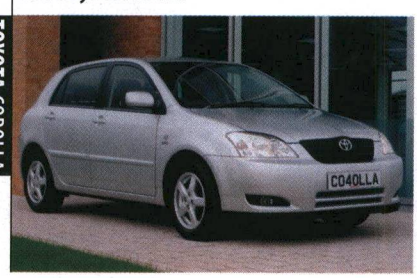
NEW You'll be able to go for all but the premium superminis, and several larger models are also available new at this price level, including the **Mitsubishi Carisma**, **Seat Leon**, **Skoda Octavia** and **Suzuki Liana**.
USED You can start considering slightly more exotic models, as well as saloons and hatchbacks. For example, a two-year-old **Ford Cougar** or a three-year-old **Toyota MR2** would be within reach. Alternatively, there are basic versions of off-roaders, including a two-year-old **Jeep Wrangler** or **Mitsubishi Shogun**, or a three-year-old **Daihatsu Fourtrak** or **Vauxhall Frontera**. You can also start considering MPVs, such as a two-year-old **Vauxhall Zafira** or three-year-old **Seat Alhambra**.

AROUND **£12,000**

NEW You can get a new **Mini Cooper** for this money, and you've entered the main battleground for top-selling medium-sized cars, including the **Fiat Stilo**, **Ford Focus**, **Honda Civic**, **Nissan Almera**, **Peugeot 307**, **Renault Mégane**, **Toyota Corolla**, **VW Golf** and **Vauxhall Astra**.
USED Large saloons available at this price include a one-year-old **Alfa Romeo 156** or a three-year-old **Audi A4**, **BMW 318i** or **Mercedes-Benz C180**.

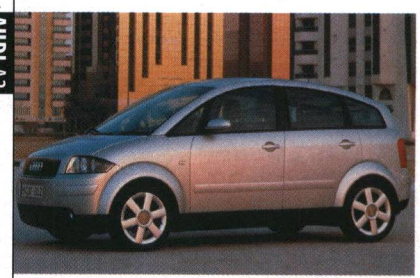
Sporty models include a two-year-old **Mazda MX5** or a three-year-old **MGF**. There's a relatively wide range of MPVs available for around £12,000, including the **Chrysler Voyager**, **Ford Galaxy** and **Toyota Previa**.

TOYOTA COROLLA



AROUND **£14,000**

AUDI A2



NEW Premium small cars like the **Audi A2** and the **Mercedes A140** start at just under £14,000, and you also enter larger saloon and small MPV territory. The **Alfa 156**, **Citroën C5**, **Honda Accord**, new **Mazda 6** and **Nissan Primera** ranges start at this price, and, if you are in the market for an MPV, you can get a **Chrysler PT Cruiser**, **Fiat Multipla diesel**, **Kia Sedona**, **Mazda Premacy** or **Renault Scénic 1.8** for this money, too.
USED More powerful and luxurious saloons include the **Lexus IS200**, a **Mercedes-Benz C240** or a **Saab 9-5 2.3**. You can get a few more 4x4s, like a five-door **Isuzu Trooper** diesel or a **Land Rover Discovery 3.9**. Most larger MPVs become available with this money.

AROUND **£16,000**

VAUXHALL VECTRA

NEW £15,000 to £16,000 gets you into the starting range for the high-volume sellers targeted at fleets, including the **BMW 3-series**, **Ford Mondeo 2.0**, **Renault Laguna 2.0**, **Vauxhall Vectra 2.2** and **VW Passat 1.8** (or less common models, like the **Mitsubishi Galant**). You can also get a few of the less expensive off-roaders, like the **Daewoo Korando**, **Hyundai Santa Fe**, **Jeep Wrangler** and **Mazda Tribute**. Sports models include the **Mazda MX-5** and the **MGF**.
USED Powerful luxury saloons, like the **Audi A8 2.8**, **BMW 523i** and **Volvo S80 2.8**, may be available at this price, as can a fairly basic specification **BMW Z3** or a middle-of-the-range five-door **Land Rover Discovery** diesel.

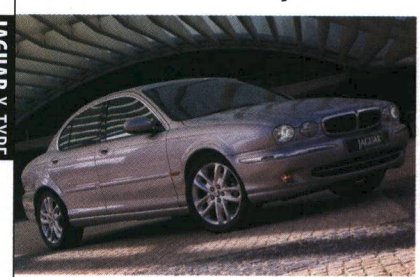
AROUND **£18,000**

NEW You can get top-of-the-range versions of some small off-roaders for this kind of money, including the **Honda CR-V**, **Jeep Cherokee**, five-door **Land Rover Freelander** and **Subaru Forester**, or more basic larger off-roaders, like the **Ford Maverick** or **Isuzu Trooper**. More conventional cars include the **Audi A4 1.6**, **Rover 75 2.0** and the **Saab 9-3 2.0**. You can also buy MPVs like the **Chrysler Voyager**, **Ford Galaxy**, **Mazda MPV**, **Seat Alhambra** or the **Toyota Avensis Verso**.
USED The **Jaguar S-type 3.0**, **Lexus GS300** and the **Mercedes-Benz CLK 200** all sell at around this price and, to suit more exotic tastes, a **Lotus Elise** could be within your range.

HONDA CR-V

AROUND **£21,000**

JAGUAR X-TYPE



NEW You can choose higher-specification versions of most larger saloons when you enter this price level, and you could also get an MPV with all the trimmings. You could also choose a **Jaguar X-type**, **Lexus IS200**, **Mercedes-Benz C180**, new **Renault Vel Satis**, **Saab 9-5**, **Toyota Camry**, **Vauxhall Omega MV6** or **Volvo S60**, which all start at about £21,000.
USED Again, you may choose to buy some of the models already mentioned, but with higher specification. Luxury and off-road options open up, too, and you may want to go for a **BMW 540i**, **Jaguar Sovereign V8** or a **Mercedes-Benz CLK 200**, a **Range Rover 4.0**, or a four-year-old **Mercedes-Benz ML 320**.

RATING THE DEALERS

There are big differences in the way dealers treat their customers. So which manufacturers get the thumbs up from owners?

Buying a car is an expensive purchase, so you should be entitled to expect good customer care. Similarly, if you're spending several hundred pounds having your car serviced or repaired, you're entitled to fair and honest treatment. But do you always get it? And which dealers are getting it right?

Our survey reports on more than 25,000 new cars bought from a dealer. As well as telling us about the cars they own, *Which?* members told us what they thought of the way their franchised garage treated them. We asked about the service they received when they bought their car and also how well they were treated when the garage worked on it.

SALES AND SERVICE

Overall, just over half (55 per cent) of people said they were very satisfied with how they were treated when they bought their car. But

HOW OWNERS RATE THE DEALERS

The league tables here show the percentage of people who said they were very satisfied with their dealer.

BUYING A CAR

Jaguar	84%	200
Lexus	75%	91
BMW	71%	658
Daihatsu	68%	62
Subaru	68%	197
Daewoo	66%	228
Saab	66%	303
Mercedes-Benz	65%	646
Toyota	65%	1349
Honda	64%	1147
Skoda	64%	344
Proton	63%	76
Hyundai	62%	159
Mazda	62%	387
Audi	61%	476
Chrysler	60%	90
Suzuki	59%	144
Volvo	59%	601
Kia	57%	56
Mitsubishi	57%	192
Land Rover	57%	286
Nissan	56%	1346
Seat	55%	220
Vauxhall	54%	1656
Rover	53%	1155
Citroën	51%	686
Renault	50%	1318
Volkswagen	50%	1635
Jeep	49%	67
Peugeot	49%	1426
Ford	47%	2401
Alfa Romeo	42%	99
Fiat	38%	475

Average 55% | Sample size

SERVICING AND REPAIRS

Jaguar	77%	200
Proton	76%	62
Daihatsu	74%	47
Lexus	67%	95
Subaru	67%	194
Toyota	63%	1228
Honda	62%	1023
Skoda	61%	303
BMW	61%	724
Mazda	61%	366
Mitsubishi	57%	173
Saab	57%	309
Mercedes-Benz	56%	692
Nissan	56%	1081
Hyundai	55%	148
Audi	52%	492
Chrysler	52%	89
Daewoo	51%	218
Kia	51%	49
Rover	51%	866
Volvo	51%	608
Land Rover	50%	274
Citroën	50%	581
Seat	49%	198
Suzuki	48%	122
Vauxhall	48%	1485
Renault	47%	1150
Ford	46%	2023
Volkswagen	46%	1590
Peugeot	45%	1185
Jeep	42%	69
Alfa Romeo	37%	126
Fiat	36%	373

Average 55% | Sample size

there's a huge gap between the top of the league table (Jaguar, at 84 per cent) and the bottom (Fiat, at 38 per cent). The story for servicing and repairs is much the same, though a few manufacturers seem to be putting more effort into making a sale than they do into after-sales care. Mercedes-Benz, Saab and Daewoo all scored significantly worse for servicing than they did for sales.

ON THE SLIDE

A number of manufacturers have dropped down our league tables compared with last year. Lexus, Suzuki and Daewoo, in particular, have done worse this year for servicing. From topping the service ratings, Lexus' rating has dropped a surprising 16 per cent (though the biggest drop was for Jeep – down 21 per cent).

NOT THE WHOLE STORY

Our ratings only reflect how well owners thought they were treated by the manufacturers' garages. And when it comes to servicing and repairs, this is only part of the story.

Our research over the last 30 years has shown consistently that many garages aren't doing a good a job when it comes to servicing cars. In numerous 'mystery-shopping' exercises we have done, we have found that garages routinely miss faults, charge for work they haven't done, and recommend unnecessary repairs. Franchised dealers and independent garages show the same poor level.

Unless you're a car expert, there's little you can do to check what a garage tells you. That's why Consumers' Association is backing a government plan to introduce a national 'Good garage' scheme.

Under the scheme, garages would sign up to a set of minimum standards and agree to a code of conduct. There would be a clear complaints procedure for customers and an independent arbitration system in the event of a problem. Crucially, the scheme would be run by an independent body which would inspect garages and also carry out 'mystery shopping' to check the quality of work of garages that were part of the scheme.

The government is due to produce a leaflet later this month giving tips for consumers when dealing with garages. It tells you the questions to ask, as well as giving advice about replacement items like tyres and brakes. The leaflet will be available on www.which.net and from many trading standards departments (contact your local council).

GARAGE TIPS

There are some things you can do to improve your chances of a good service from your garage.

- Some local trading standards departments run their own approved garage schemes – check with your local council.
- Ask the garage whether it is qualified to service your model and age of car. Modern cars are complicated and not all the garages have the right specialist knowledge.
- Be clear about the work you want done. Tell the garage what type of service you need or what faults you want investigated.
- Get a fixed quote for routine servicing, or an estimate for any fault-finding work. Tell the garage to get your approval before carrying out any extra repairs.
- If the garage does recommend non-urgent repairs, or you're suspicious, get quotes from other garages and, if necessary, get a second opinion.
- Get a written invoice, and ask to see any replaced parts before paying.

RELIABILITY RATED

Use the findings of our unique survey to choose a car that won't let you down

How can you tell whether what you're buying will provide you with reliable transport? You may just need to go to the local shops, or you may drive regularly halfway across Europe. Whatever the case, you can't tell just by looking at a car whether it will make it.

Most makers would rather you didn't ask about whether their cars will let you down. To find out which ones do, we asked 80,000 randomly-selected *Which?* members to tell us how well their cars have done over the past year. In total, we received information on 33,579 cars up to eight years old.

In our analysis, we've separated the information to show three age groups: cars less than two years old; three- to five-year-old cars; and cars from six to eight years old.

For each age group, we've looked at three aspects of reliability.

- **Breakdowns** Whether the car broke down or failed to start in the 12-month period. We've excluded accidents, punctures, flat batteries as a result of leaving the lights on, and running out of fuel.
- **Problems** Things which are annoying or inconvenient but don't put the car out of action – for example, squeaks and rattles or loose trim.
- **Faults** Parts that have been replaced or repaired. We've excluded routinely replaced parts, like spark plugs, and parts replaced as a result of an accident or through misuse.

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

The league tables, opposite, show how different makes of cars of different ages did for the most important aspect of reliability – breakdowns. They show just how big the differences are between the best and worst brands. For example, 20 per cent of Jeeps in the newest age group broke down, compared with just 1 per cent of Mazdas. And more than a third of Daewoos in the oldest group broke down, compared with just 6 per cent of Hondas.

PROBLEM CHILD

In terms of problems, Japanese brands did well across all age groups, as they have done in the past. Lexus – among last year's high perform-

OVERALL RATINGS

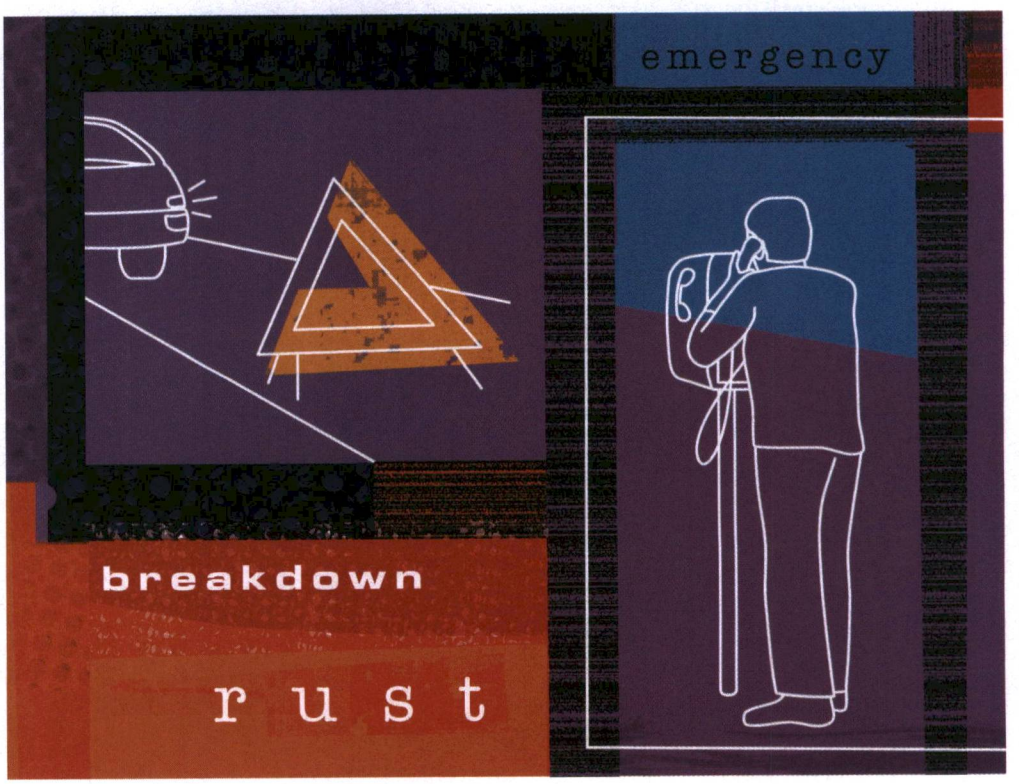
Here we show how the major manufacturers rate overall, taking account of reported breakdowns, faults and problems. Makers are listed alphabetically within groups, and sample sizes are in brackets.

BEST
- **Honda** (1,598)
- **Lexus** (152)
- **Mazda** (581)
- **Mercedes-Benz** (1,053)
- **Suzuki** (190)
- **Toyota** (1,989)

GOOD
- **Audi** (825)
- **Hyundai** (241)
- **Jaguar** (307)
- **Nissan** (1,945)
- **Seat** (331)
- **Subaru** (287)

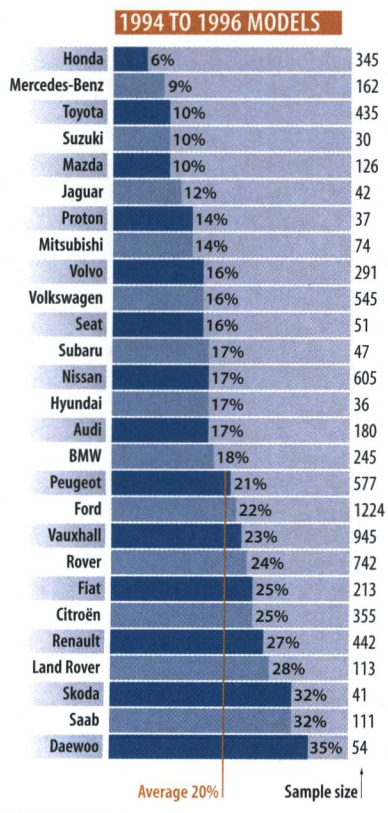
AVERAGE
- **BMW** (1247)
- **Chrysler** (116)
- **Daewoo** (366)
- **Daihatsu** (88)
- **Ford** (4,433)
- **Isuzu** (36)
- **Kia** (77)
- **Mitsubishi** (297)
- **Proton** (102)
- **Saab** (490)
- **Skoda** (427)
- **Volkswagen** (2,606)
- **Volvo** (1,029)

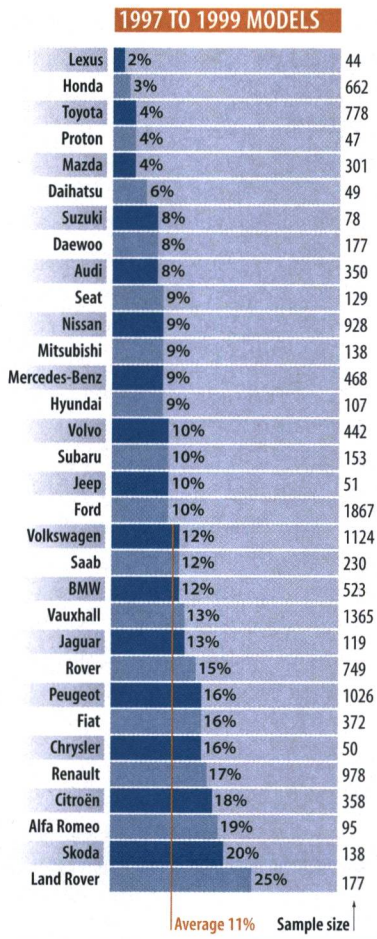
POOR
- **Alfa Romeo** (229)
- **Citroën** (1,129)
- **Fiat** (834)
- **Jeep** (104)
- **Land Rover** (480)
- **Peugeot** (2,307)
- **Renault** (2,179)
- **Rover** (1,924)
- **Vauxhall** (3,180)

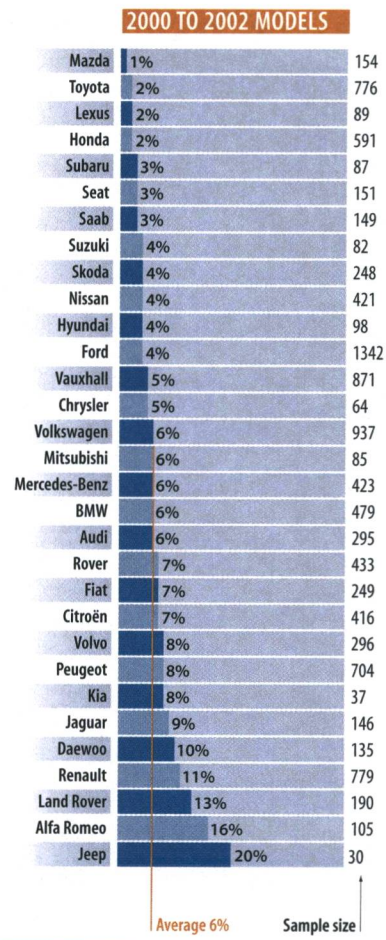


THE BIG BREAKDOWN

These league tables show the percentage of older cars (1994 to 1996), recent cars (1997 to 1999 models) and newest cars (2000 to 2002) that broke down in the past 12 months.







ers – tops the table, with just 5 per cent of its new cars raising complaints. Land Rover and Alfa Romeos fall at the other end of the scale, with 38 per cent of owners reporting problems.

For three- to five-year-old cars, Nissan (16 per cent) and Honda and Suzuki (both 17 per cent) were among the best. Alfa Romeo and Land Rover are again at the bottom, though Seat and Vauxhall were only slightly better.

For six- to eight-year-old cars, Mazda topped the chart, with 21 per cent having problems. Subaru runs a close second, on 22 per cent. Skoda is at the bottom of the pile, at 51 per cent.

FAULTY CONNECTIONS

More than a third (34 per cent) of cars less than two years old needed a part replacing – a disappointing figure, which has not improved in our last few surveys.

Even the best brand in this group, Lexus, had a reasonably high rate of replacement parts, at 12 per cent. There were five other manufacturers with better-than-average replacement rates. They included the familiar Japanese brands, Toyota (with 20 per cent), Honda (26 per cent), Mazda (26 per cent) and Nissan (28 per cent). But Ford also joins this group – relatively few (26 per cent) Fords needed a new part, which represents a significant improvement for the European maker.

Several manufacturers join the below-average group this year: Chrysler (47 per cent), Citroën (38 per cent), Skoda (40 per cent) and Volkswagen (38 per cent).

OUR SURVEY

In January 2002, we sent out 80,000 questionnaires to a random selection of *Which?* members. We received 32,055 completed questionnaires, which gave us details on 33,579 cars up to eight years old.

READERS RATE THEIR CARS

Do you like your car enough to recommend it to a friend?

Throughout *Which? Car*, there's advice and ratings for many objective aspects of cars – how reliable, how safe, and how secure various models are. But what do people who own and use cars think of them? There's no shortage of people's views of cars, in magazines and newspapers (not to mention on TV, radio and the internet). But most of these views are from journalists who drive a car for a relatively short time, and don't get 'under the skin' of the car, to see how it copes when faced with the tasks that motorists face day to day: commuting or travelling with a full load of children and luggage.

To find out what owners think of their cars, we ask people in our motoring survey for their opinions, as well as objective information (such as whether their car has broken down). They rate a range of aspects, covering space, comfort, ease of driving, performance and running costs. Those aspects are covered in the 'Owners' verdicts' section of the model summaries, starting on p31. Here we include the results of the defining question in our survey: would you recommend your car to a friend?

The table, opposite, shows the percentage of people in our survey who said they would definitely recommend their make of car to a friend. Overall, almost two thirds of people (63 per cent) said they would definitely recommend their make of car to a friend – but there's a huge gap between the top and bottom. Nearly nine out of ten Lexus owners said they would recommend their car to a friend, but fewer than half of Vauxhall, Rover and Fiat owners would make such a recommendation.

MODEL PERFORMERS

We also looked in more detail to see which models are most liked – and which didn't cut the mustard with our members. We've categorised them by size, to help you see how competing models compare. For each class of car, we've listed the most liked cars in order of their recommendation score. The list of least liked cars begins with the one with the lowest satisfaction score.

SUPERMINIS

TOYOTA YARIS

▲ There's little to fault the Toyota Yaris, according to owners, apart from the rear view

MOST LIKED **Toyota Yaris**, **Skoda Fabia**, **Toyota Yaris Verso**, **Toyota Starlet**, **Daewoo Matiz**, **Nissan Micra**, **Ford Puma**, **Ford Ka**, **Renault Clio** (from 2001), **VW Polo** (1994 to 2001)
LEAST LIKED **Citroën AX**, **Rover 100/Metro**, **Ford Fiesta** (1991 to 1995), **Fiat Cinquecento**, **Vauxhall Corsa** (1993 to 2000), **Fiat Punto** (1994 to 1999), **Peugeot 106**, **Rover 200/25** (from 1995), **Renault Clio** (1991 to 1998), **Ford Fiesta** (1995 to 2002)

MEDIUM CARS

AUDI A3

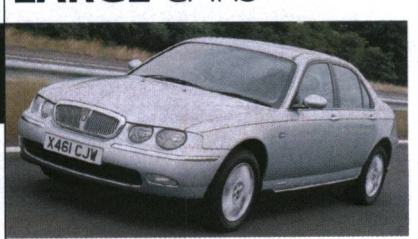
▲ Owners love the A3's performance, but are disappointed by the lack of space

MOST LIKED **VW Beetle**, **Fiat Multipla**[1], **Audi A3**, **Subaru Impreza** (1993 to 2000), **Toyota Corolla** (1992 to 1997), **Citroën Xsara Picasso**[1], **Seat Leon**, **VW Bora**, **Ford Focus**, **Renault Scénic**[1], **Toyota Corolla** (1997 to 2000), **VW Golf** (from 1997), **Vauxhall Zafira**[1], **Honda Civic** (1995 to 2000), **VW Golf/Vento** (1992 to 1998)
LEAST LIKED **Daewoo Nexia**, **Ford Escort/Orion**, **Fiat Brava/Bravo**, **Citroën ZX**, **Vauxhall Astra** (1991 to 1998), **Rover 400/45**, **Citroën Xsara**, **Rover 200/400** (1992 to 1995), **Vauxhall Astra** (from 1998), **Renault Mégane**, **Peugeot 306**

1 These smaller MPVs have been compared with medium-sized cars for this rating

LARGE CARS

ROVER 75



▲ The 75's style and design get the thumbs-up from owners. It's strong on space, performance and driving pleasure, too

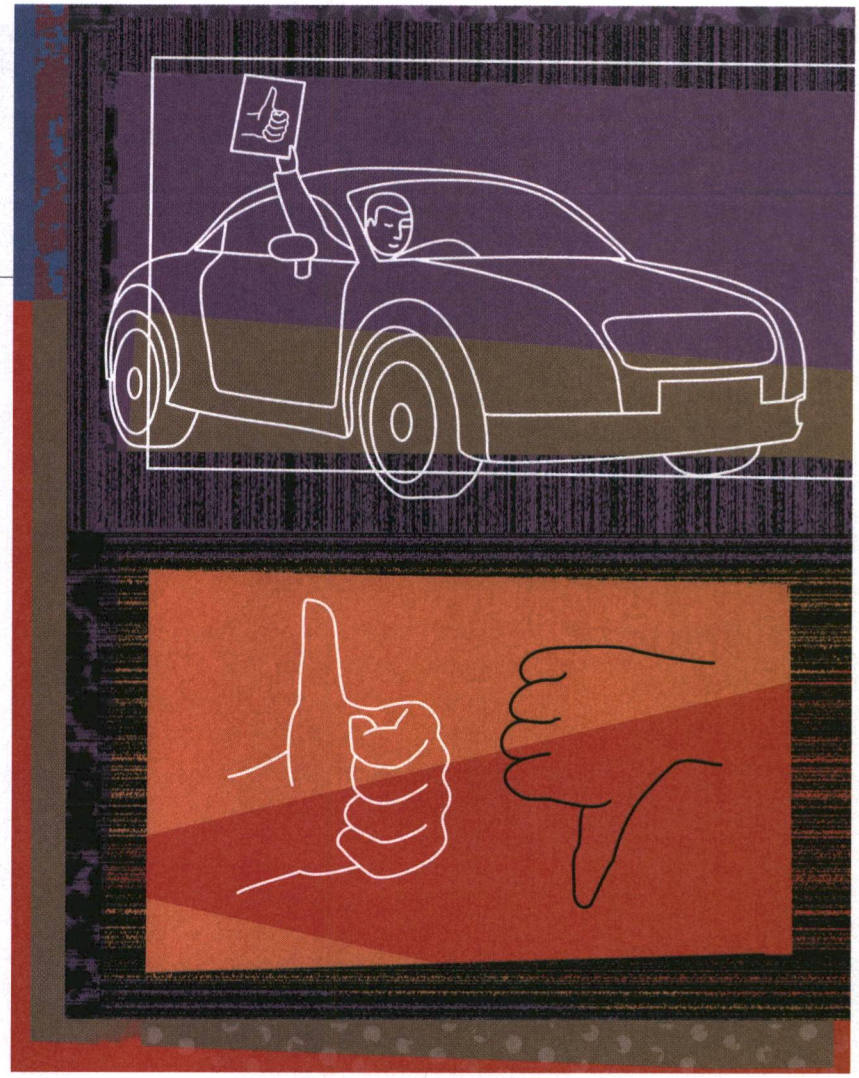
MOST LIKED **Mercedes-Benz C-class** (from 2000), **Skoda Octavia**, **Lexus IS200/300**, **Audi A4** (from 2001), **BMW 3-series** (from 1998), **Subaru Forester**, **Rover 75**, **Subaru Legacy**, **BMW 3-series** (1991 to 1998), **Nissan Primera** (1996 to 1999), **Audi A4** (1995 to 2000), **VW Passat** (1997), **Nissan Primera** (1990 to 1996), **Toyota Avensis**, **Toyota Carina E**, **Honda Accord** (from 1998)
LEAST LIKED **Vauxhall Vectra** (to 2002), **Daewoo Espero**, **Citroën Xantia**, **Volvo 440/460**, **Renault Laguna** (1994 to 2000), **Rover 600**, **Saab 900**, **Vauxhall Cavalier**, **Ford Mondeo** (1993 to 2000), **Volvo S40/V40**

THE MAKERS RATED

These tables show the percentage of people in our survey who said they would definitely recommend their make of car to a friend

		Sample size
Lexus	88%	153
Isuzu	86%	36
BMW	81%	1252
Skoda	81%	430
Subaru	81%	290
Jaguar	78%	306
Toyota	78%	1988
Audi	76%	830
Mercedes-Benz	75%	1056
Nissan	72%	1961
Honda	71%	1596
Mazda	71%	583
Proton	71%	102
Seat	70%	333
Chrysler	69%	116
Volkswagen	69%	2620
Daihatsu	68%	87
Volvo	67%	1031
Alfa Romeo	66%	230
Saab	66%	488
Mitsubishi	63%	298
Hyundai	61%	241
Renault	59%	2191
Suzuki	59%	192
Daewoo	58%	368
Ford	58%	4448
Peugeot	58%	2314
Kia	57%	77
Land Rover	56%	485
Citroën	52%	1128
Jeep	51%	104
Fiat	49%	837
Rover	49%	1915
Vauxhall	48%	3182

Average 63%



LUXURY CARS

BMW 5-SERIES

▲ Owners say the 5-series has plenty of qualities, but space for rear passengers or luggage aren't among them

MOST LIKED **BMW 5-series** (from 1996), **Jaguar XJ series**, **BMW 7-series** (1994 to 2002), **Saab 9-5**, **Volvo V70** (from 2000), **Mercedes-Benz E-class** (1995 to 2002)
LEAST LIKED **Vauxhall Omega**, **Rover 800**, **Ford Scorpio**, **Saab 9000 CS/CD**

SPORTS/COUPÉS

MAZDA MX-5

▲ The MX-5 is a pleasure to drive, but comes in for criticism for limited storage space
MOST LIKED **Audi TT**, **Mazda MX-5**
LEAST LIKED **MGF**

MPVs

TOYOTA PICNIC

▲ Limited luggage space in this popular MPV
MOST LIKED **Toyota Previa** (1990 to 2000) **Seat Alhambra**, **Toyota Picnic**

OFF-ROADERS

HONDA CR-V

▲ Owners are particularly impressed with the CR-V's low running costs, and find little else to fault in this smaller off-roader, too

MOST LIKED **Toyota RAV4** (from 2000), **Honda CR-V** (1997 to 2002), **Toyota Landcruiser**, **Toyota RAV4** (1994 to 2000)
LEAST LIKED **Jeep Cherokee** (1993 to 2001), **Range Rover** (1994 to 2002), **Land Rover Discovery** (to 1998), **Land Rover Freelander**

THE SAFE COMBINATION

Our latest tests show cars are steadily getting safer. But some makers still need to lift their game

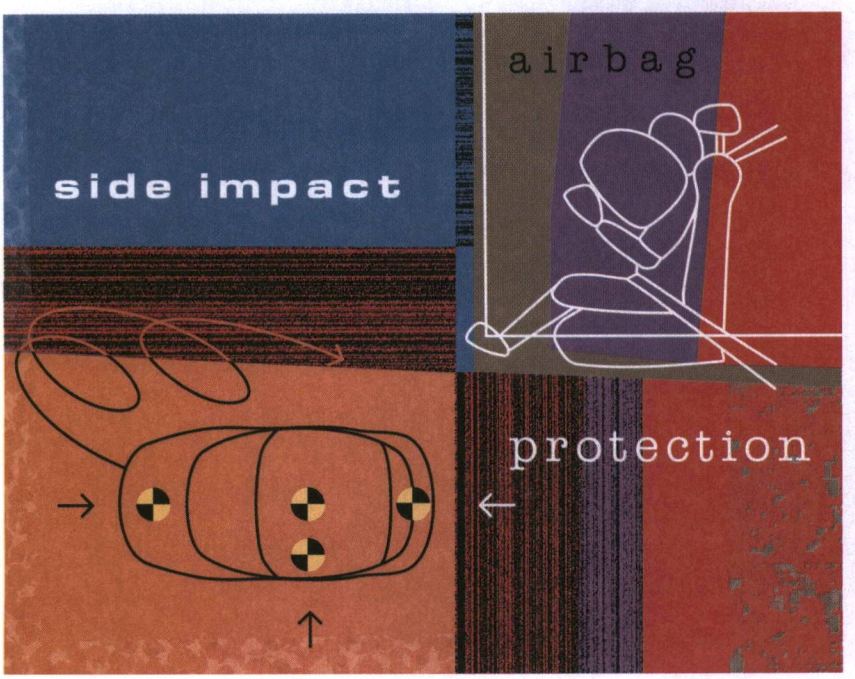
In our drive to help you choose a safer car, and to pressure car makers to keep raising the safety stakes, we've rated 12 new cars for this year's *Which? Car*. None has set a new standard for secondary safety, but the Jaguar S-type gives our current top scorer, the Volvo S80, a run for its money. And the latest Ford Fiesta and VW Polo join the Skoda Fabia as class-leading superminis.

Our ever-expanding league tables now include safety scores for nearly 90 current models, so are a great source of independent advice to help you choose a car that will offer some peace of mind.

HOW WE RATE CAR SAFETY

Our experts rate secondary safety by assessing how well the cars would protect all occupants in different types of crash: head-on, side and rear impact, and rollover. Different aspects of safety design are weighted according to how critical they are in protecting occupants. The best example of each safety feature sets the benchmark for other manufacturers to improve on, so there is no maximum score in our assessments – it is an evolutionary rating process.

We also take the weight of the car into account, as, all things being equal, a heavier car tends to be safer than a lighter one. This means you can compare our secondary safety scores across all classes of car.



CRASH TESTS

Alongside our own assessments, *Which?* is also a partner in the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP), which crash-tests new cars and looks at pedestrian protection and child seat safety.

There are some differences between Euro NCAP results and our own ratings because they evaluate safety in different ways (and sometimes on different variants of the same model). However, both approaches generally reveal a similar overall picture, and some findings from Euro NCAP crash tests now feed into the secondary safety scores. So the two systems should be seen as complementary, although secondary safety scores consider the protection of all occupants in more types of crash.

STANDARD PACKAGE IMPROVING

It's pleasing to see that many new car makers are now including many safety features as standard on their cars. Two front airbags are standard on all cars we've looked at this time, and side airbags are fitted on all but two models (the Suzuki Ignis and Liana). But side head airbags were found on only four models: the Fiat Stilo, Ford Fiesta, Jaguar S-type and Nissan Primera.

All the new cars tested have seat belts with pre-tensioners and load limiters (designed to reduce pressure on the chest after impact, by making the airbag spread the load).

NEW CARS THAT STAND OUT

The Jaguar S-type, with a rating of 12.5, becomes the second highest-scoring car in our secondary safety assessments, bettered only by the Volvo S80 (with a score of 13). This is mainly due to the comprehensive package of airbags, and the car's significant weight. Some safety aspects of the S-type, which has been on sale since 1998, are actually dating a little now, such as its door handle design, which could

SECONDARY SAFETY SCORES

These tables show you how well a wide range of current models will protect you in a crash

SUPERMINIS

		Euro NCAP score
Ford Fiesta 1.4	9.5	★★★★
Skoda Fabia 1.4	9.5	★★★★
VW Polo 1.2	9.5	★★★★
Renault Clio 1.2	9	★★★★
VW Lupo 1.4	9	★★★★
Mini Cooper 1.6	8.5	★★★★
Toyota Yaris 1.0	8.5	★★★★
Citroën C3 1.4	8.5	
Honda Jazz 1.4	8.5	
Fiat Punto 1.9 dsl	8	★★★★
Vauxhall Corsa 1.0	8	★★★★
Seat Arosa 1.0	8	
Suzuki Ignis 1.3	8	
Vauxhall Agila 1.0	8	
Peugeot 206 1.1	7.5	★★★★
Ford Ka 1.3	7.5	★★★
Rover 25 1.6	7.5	★★★
Nissan Micra 1.0	7	★★
Peugeot 106 1.1	6.5	
Citroën Saxo 1.1	6	★★
Suzuki Alto 1.0	4	

MPVs

		Euro NCAP score
Toyota Avensis Verso 2.0	11	
Honda Stream 1.7	10.5	★★★★
Chrysler PT Cruiser 2.0	10.5	
Nissan Almera Tino 1.8	10.5	
Toyota Corolla Verso 1.8	10	
Renault Mégane Scénic 1.6	9.5	★★★★
Mazda Premacy 1.8	9.5	★★★
Toyota Yaris Verso 1.3	9.5	
Citroën Xsara Picasso 1.6	9	★★★★
Vauxhall Zafira 1.6	9	★★★
Fiat Multipla 1.6	8.5	★★★
Mitsubishi Space Star 1.3	8.5	★★★

LUXURY CARS

		Euro NCAP score
Volvo S80 2.4	13	★★★★
Jaguar S-type 3.0	12.5	
Mercedes E-class 2.4[1]	12	★★★★
Audi A6 2.8	11.5	★★★
BMW 5-series 2.0	11	★★★★
Vauxhall Omega 2.5	11	★★★

1 Model replaced August 2002

MEDIUM CARS

		Euro NCAP score
VW Beetle 2.0	10.5	★★★★
VW Bora 1.9 dsl	10.5	
Ford Focus 1.8	10	★★★★
Honda Civic 1.6	10	★★★★
VW Golf 1.6	10	★★★★
Fiat Stilo 1.6	10	
Audi A3 1.6	9.5	★★★★
Peugeot 307 1.6	9.5	★★★★
Renault Mégane 1.6	9.5	★★★★
Alfa Romeo 147 1.6	9.5	★★★
Seat Leon 1.6	9.5	
Subaru Impreza 2.0	9.5	
Suzuki Liana 1.6	9.5	
Toyota Corolla 1.6	9.5	
Mercedes A140 1.4	9	★★★★
Nissan Almera 1.8	9	★★★★
Vauxhall Astra 1.6	9	★★★★
Toyota Prius Hybrid	9	
Audi A2 1.4	8.5	★★★★
Citroën Xsara 1.8	8.5	★★★
Hyundai Accent 1.3	8.5	★☆
Chrysler Neon 2.0	8.5	
Mazda 323 1.3	8	
Rover 45 1.4	8	
Proton Wira 1.5	6.5	

LARGE CARS

		Euro NCAP score
Volvo S60 2.0	12.5	★★★★
Jaguar X-type 3.0	11.5	★★★★
Volvo S40 2.0	11.5	★★★★
Mercedes C-class 2.0	11	★★★★★
Renault Laguna 1.6	11	★★★★★
Audi A4 2.0	11	★★★★
Lexus IS200 2.0	11	
BMW 3-series 1.9	10.5	★★★★
Ford Mondeo 1.8	10.5	★★★★
Honda Accord 2.0	10.5	★★★★
Rover 75 1.8	10.5	★★★★
Saab 9-3 2.0	10.5	★★★★
Nissan Primera 1.8	10.5	
Citroën C5 1.8	10	★★★★
Skoda Octavia 1.8	10	★★★★
VW Passat 2.0	10	★★★★
Peugeot 406 2.0 dsl	10	★★★
Toyota Avensis 2.0	10	
Alfa Romeo156 2.0	9.5	
Hyundai Elantra 1.8	9	★★★
Fiat Marea 2.0	9	
Mitsubishi Carisma 1.8	8.5	★★★
Daewoo Nubira 2.0	8	

RATING SAFETY

Our ratings tell you how well a car should protect you in a variety of crashes. The higher the score, the safer the car. The best score achieved so far is 13, but there is no maximum. Our scores use the same criteria whatever the size of car, which means you can compare scores for cars in different classes. Cars newly tested for this article are highlighted in **orange**.

Where cars have the same secondary safety score, we've ordered them according to their Euro NCAP star rating (if they have one). This is a different type of safety assessment system. Euro NCAP scores are out of five stars, with a ☆ indicating an unacceptably high risk of serious injury in a particular type of impact. A car rated ★★☆ is safer overall than one rated ★★, but worse than one rated ★★★. Ratings are not comparable across classes, so a small car with four stars is not equivalent to a large car with four stars.

allow doors to open in a rollover accident.

The new Ford Fiesta is a big improvement on the model it replaced – upping its score from 8 to 9.5 in our assessments, and three stars to four stars in Euro NCAP.

IN THE NECK

For some time, we have been saying that there is need for improvement in the design of head restraints, as many cars have ones that can increase the chance of certain types of neck injury. Among the latest cars we've looked at, we were pleased to see some commendable head restraints in the Citroën C3 and Fiat Stilo. But those in the Seat Leon and VW Polo were particularly disappointing and have not addressed our criticisms of those on previous VW group models.

LOCK OUT THE CAR THIEVES

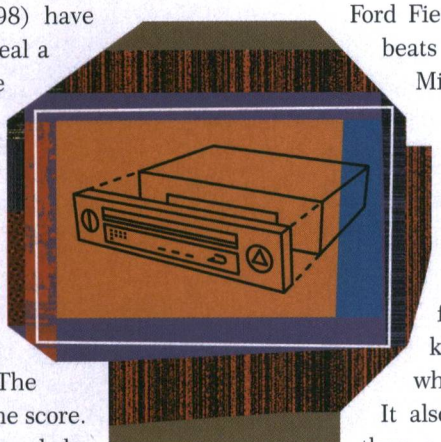
Waking up to an empty driveway is something most of us dread. We've been busy breaking into more new cars, to find the ones that frustrate thieves

Car crime is at its lowest level for 13 years, according to the latest government statistics. That may seem reassuring, but car crime still accounts for around a fifth of all reported crime – and probably a lot of unreported crime, too. It costs motorists, insurers and the police an estimated £3 billion a year, but such large figures can mean little compared with the distress and inconvenience it can cause.

HOW WE RATE SECURITY

Which? has been breaking into cars for almost 40 years, to help you choose a model that can offer some peace of mind, and to keep pressure on the manufacturers to improve the security features on their cars.

Our resident 'thieves' have cracked the security systems of more than 1,000 cars – usually without even breaking into a sweat. Features such as immobilisers (standard on all new cars sold in the UK since 1998) have made it much harder to steal a car. But it can take a while before some of the latest security features are incorporated into all new models. Our ratings are based on the time it takes to overcome, or remove, each individual security feature using methods familiar to experienced car thieves. The longer it takes, the higher the score. Credit is given where it can only be done with special tools or techniques.



NEW ASSESSMENTS

For this year's *Which? Car*, we've assessed the security of 12 new and recent models. These models are highlighted in the table, opposite, along with 71 cars we've tested previously. We give a rating out of 10 for how easily each car can be stolen ('theft of') and how easy it is to break into ('theft from'). Cars are grouped into types to help you choose, for instance, the most secure supermini.

Even if you choose a car which scores well in our tests, vigilance and common sense will further reduce your chances of being a victim of car theft. See 'Smash and grab', *Which?*, July 2002, p47 for some practical advice for keeping your car and its contents safe.

JAGUAR SETS THE PACE

Of the 12 newly-tested cars, we've seen some of the best and worst examples of manufacturers' efforts to frustrate opportunist thieves.

The Jaguar S-type is one of the most secure cars we've seen when it comes to trying to prevent theft of belongings from the car. It took our thieves more than two minutes to get into its boot, and the glovebox resisted attack for more than five minutes – all but the most determined thief would have given up well before. The S-type also has an impressive alarm system and a coded CD player that could only be used in another S-type.

The latest incarnation of the ever popular Ford Fiesta also scores well, and beats the recently-assessed Mini to the most secure supermini crown. The Fiesta's stereo is also unique to that model and 'multi-part' (display is separate from the control unit). A thief seeing this from outside the car would know it wasn't worth their while trying to break in for it. It also took our thieves more than a minute to get into the Fiesta's boot, which is reasonably good but not what we consider 'secure'.

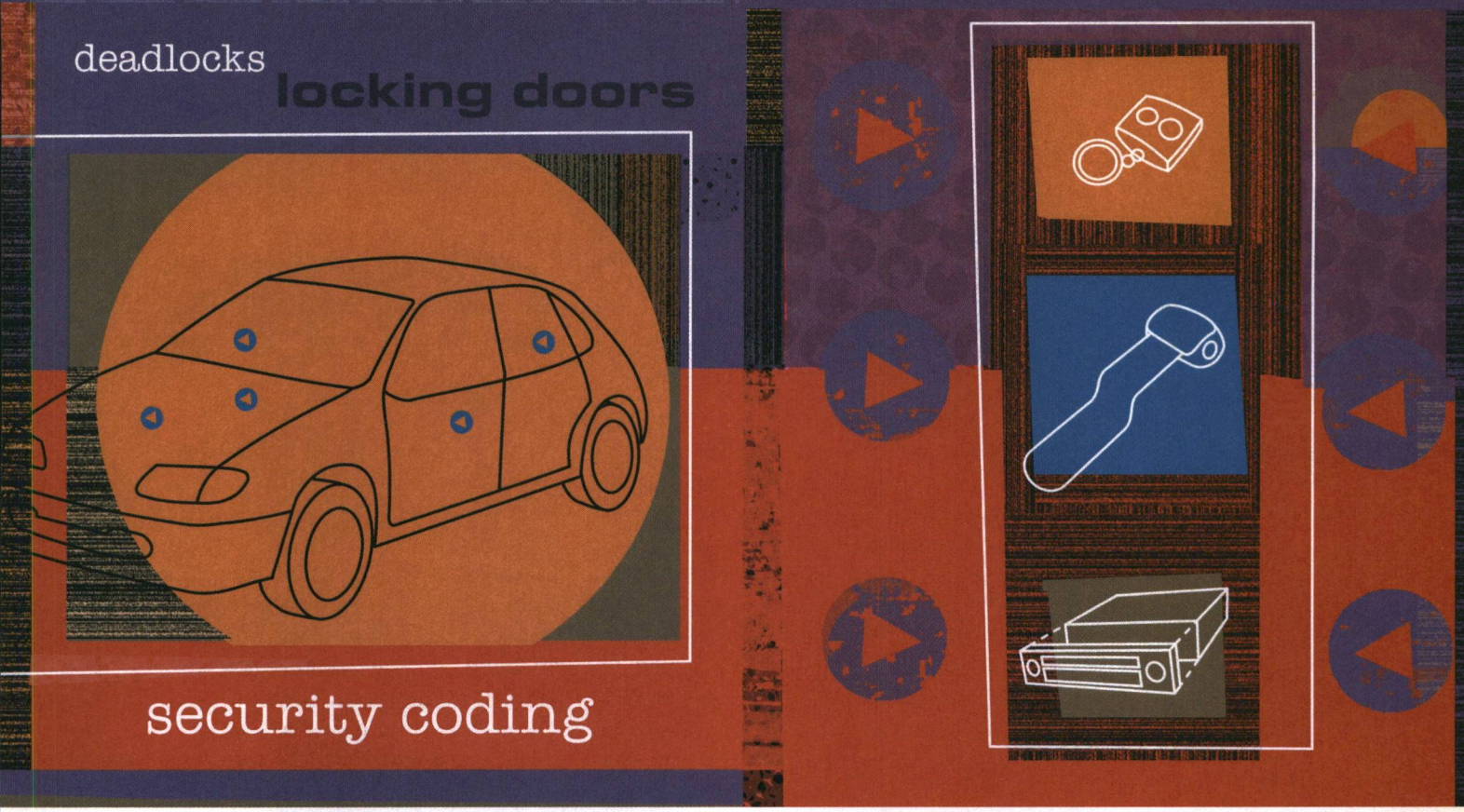
SUZUKI NOT UP TO SCRATCH

At the other end of the scale, we were disappointed to find that two quite new models are easy targets for the casual thief.

Worst was the Suzuki Liana, which barely managed a single point for the 'theft from' rating, so poor was its all-round design for security. The Suzuki Ignis fared little better. We don't think Suzuki is making enough effort to protect its cars, so we're raising our concerns with the company.

deadlocks

locking doors



security coding

SECURITY RATINGS

We give each car a score, out of ten, for two aspects: theft from the car and theft of the car itself. The higher the score, the more secure the car. Within car classes, cars are listed in order of the 'theft from' rating (where there's most room for improvement). Newly-assessed cars are highlighted in **orange**.

The 'theft from' rating takes into account how easy it is to break into the passenger compartment, luggage space, and glovebox, plus how secure the stereo, alarm protection, and wheels are.

The 'theft of' rating takes into account the effectiveness of the electronic immobiliser, steering/ignition lock, door locks, and alarm system. We also check whether the vehicle identification number (VIN) is visible, which serves to deter thieves.

SUPERMINIS	theft of	theft from
Ford Fiesta Ghia 1.4	7	6
Mini Cooper 1.6	6	5
Honda Jazz 1.4i SE Sport	8	4
Vauxhall Agila 1.0	8	4
Citroën C3 1.4i LX	8	3
Skoda Fabia 1.4 16V Elegance 5-dr	8	3
VW Polo 1.2 S 3-dr	8	3
Renault Clio 1.2 16V Expression 3-dr	7	3
Ford Ka 1.3i	6	3
Nissan Micra 1.0 S 3-dr	6	3
Peugeot 206 1.1 LX 5-dr	6	3
Toyota Yaris 1.0 GLS 3-dr[1]	6	3
Vauxhall Corsa 1.0 12v GLS 3-dr	6	3
VW Lupo 1.4S	7	2
Citroën Saxo 1.1i SX 5-dr	6	2
Fiat Punto 1.9 diesel 60S 3-dr	6	2
Peugeot 106 1.1 Zest 1 3-dr	6	2
Seat Arosa 1.0 Mpi 3-dr[1]	6	2
Suzuki Ignis 1.3 GL 3-dr	6	1

MEDIUM CARS	theft of	theft from
VW Beetle 2.0	7	5
Chrysler Neon 2.0 RT	6	5
VW Bora 1.9 Tdi	8	4
Nissan Almera 1.8 SE+ 5-dr	7	4
Peugeot 307 1.6 Rapier 5-dr	7	4
Toyota Prius 1.5 Hybrid	7	4
Audi A3 1.6i 3-dr	6	4
Fiat Stilo 1.6 16V Dynamic 3-dr	6	4
Renault Mégane 1.6e Sport 5-dr	6	4
Rover 45 1.4 iS 4-dr	6	4
Audi A2 1.4	8	3
Mercedes A140 Classic	7	3
Toyota Corolla 1.6 T3 5-dr	7	3
Alfa Romeo 147 1.6 T Spark 3-dr	6	3
Ford Focus 1.8 LX 5-dr	6	3
Honda Civic 1.6 SE 5-dr	6	3
Mazda 323F 1.3 16V 5-dr[1]	6	3
Rover 25 1.4 iS 5-dr	6	3
Subaru Impreza 2.0 GX 4-dr	6	3
Vauxhall Astra 1.6i LS 16v 5-dr	6	3
Seat Leon 1.6S 16V	7	2
VW Golf 1.6S 5-dr	7	2
Hyundai Accent 1.3 Si 3-dr	6	2
Citroën Xsara 1.4i 5-dr	7	1
Suzuki Liana 1.6 GL	6	1

MPVs	theft of	theft from
Nissan Almera Tino 1.8 SE+	7	5
Renault Espace 2.0 Authentique	6	5
Chrysler PT Cruiser Touring Edition	7	4
Chrysler Voyager 2.5 diesel LX	7	4
Honda Stream 1.7 SE	6	4
Renault Scénic 1.6 Expression	7	3
Toyota Avensis Verso 2.0 GLS	7	3
Toyota Yaris Verso 1.3 GS	7	3
Toyota Corolla Verso T3V VVTi 1.8	7	3
Mazda Premacy 1.8 16V[1]	6	3
Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 16v Comfort	6	3
Citroën Xsara Picasso 1.6i	7	2
Fiat Multipla 100 ELX	6	2
Mitsubishi Space Star 1.3i Equippe	6	1

LARGE CARS	theft of	theft from
BMW 318i SE 4-dr	8	7
Jaguar X-Type 3.0 SE	8	6
VW Passat 2.0 S 4-dr	8	5
Mercedes C200 Kompressor Elegance 4-dr	7	5
Nissan Primera 1.8 SE 4-dr	7	5
Toyota Avensis 2.0 GLS 5-dr[1]	7	5
Volvo S60 2.0 T	7	5
Audi A4 2.0 SE 4-dr	8	4
Honda Accord 2.0i SE 5-dr	8	4
Lexus IS200 4-dr	8	4
Ford Mondeo 1.8 LX 5-dr	7	4
Rover 75 1.8 Club	7	4
Alfa Romeo 156 2.0 T Spark 4-dr	6	4
Peugeot 406 GLX 2.0 HDi 4-dr	6	4
Citroën C5 1.8 LX 5-dr	8	3
Renault Laguna 1.6 16v Expression 5-dr	8	3
Volvo S40 2.0 SE 4-dr	6	3
Skoda Octavia 1.8 SLX 5-dr	8	2
Daewoo Nubira 2.0 CDX Estate	6	2
Fiat Marea 2.0 150 ELX 4-dr	5	2

LUXURY CARS	theft of	theft from
Jaguar S-Type 3.0 SE auto	8	7
BMW 520i SE 4-dr	8	6
Volvo S80 2.4S	8	5
Audi A6 2.8 V6 Quattro 4-dr	8	4
Mercedes-Benz E240 Elegance 4-dr[2]	8	4

▲ The Jaguar S-type is one of the most secure cars

1 Since our tests, deadlocks have been added or locks improved. The 'theft of' score may increase by up to two points 2 Model replaced August 2002

CAR RUNNING COSTS

Running a car is never cheap, but some cars are easier on the pocket than others. Here's how you can keep down your motoring costs

There's no escaping the fact that keeping a car on the road is expensive. There are the obvious annual costs like tax, insurance and servicing and, of course, fuel. But there are the less obvious costs too, like depreciation.

Even the cheapest new supermini costs around £200 a month to keep on the road, while a large luxury car can easily cost £800 or more. We've given a rating of typical running costs for each model range in our verdicts (starting on p31) and here we tell you what you can do to drive down your running costs.

DEPRECIATION

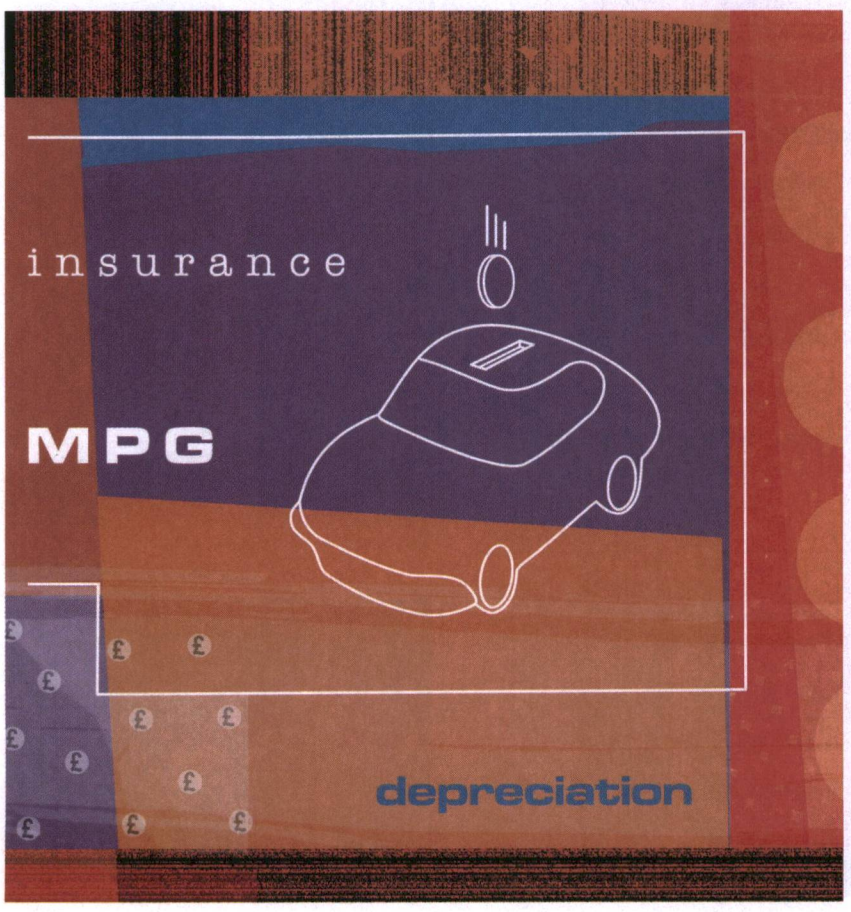
Unless your car is destined for the scrap heap, it will be worth something and therefore it's an asset. Depreciation is usually the biggest single running cost, and there's a huge difference between different models. Some cars will lose over two thirds of their value in their first three years, while others will still be worth more than half what you paid for them.

For example, the Citroën Xsara 1.6 LX and the VW Golf 1.4 E both have list prices of around £11,000. But after three years, the Xsara is likely to be worth about £3,800, while the Golf should still be worth around £5,500 – £1,700 more. This means that over a three-year period, the Xsara would have cost an extra £37 each month in depreciation.

So depreciation is a hidden cost, but it's one you can't afford to ignore. All cars lose value as soon as they're driven out of the showroom, and the biggest fall in value is over the first few months. So the best way to avoid depreciation is to not buy a brand new car. Consider a nearly-new model or a preregistered car. Alternatively, make sure you get a hefty discount. For example, if you paid £9,000 for the Xsara in our example above, you significantly reduce the loss of value.

But if you are buying new, try to choose a model that holds its value well. Models, such as Ford Mondeos and Vauxhall Vectras, which are popular with fleet buyers or car rental companies tend to lose value quickly. The operators buy them in bulk at big discounts and then the secondhand market is awash with them which hits the resale value of your car.

The other way to minimise depreciation is to sell your car for as much as possible. The best way of doing this is to sell privately rather than taking the easy option of a part-exchange with your dealer. For example, if you sold a three-year-old Ford Focus 1.4, you should easily get an extra £700 more from a private sale than by trading it in at a garage.



FUEL

For most of us, the second biggest running cost is fuel. A typical small petrol car averaging 40mpg will cost over £85 a month if driven 12,000 miles a year. There are several ways to cut this cost.

■ **Cut your usage** One obvious way to cut your fuel bill is to drive less. Almost a fifth of all journeys of less than a mile are by car. Short, stop-start journeys burn a disproportionate amount of

fuel, because the engine probably hasn't warmed up and won't be operating at peak efficiency.

■ **Choose an economical car** Choosing the right car can also help – there are significant differences in fuel economy even between cars of a similar size. A 1.2-litre Fiat Punto gets on average 50mpg, while a 1.1-litre Rover 25 gets just 42mpg. This means that over 12,000 miles, the Rover will use £150 more fuel than the Fiat – or £12 a month.

Diesel cars can be more expensive to buy than petrol versions, but the better fuel economy can mean big savings. For example, a 1.8-litre petrol Ford Focus averages 37.2mpg, while a 1.8 turbo-diesel manages more than 51mpg. If you drive 20,000 miles a year, you would save almost £500 in fuel costs with the diesel.

■ **Alternative fuels** If you opt for a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) model, you could cut your fuel bills by even more. LPG currently costs around 36p a litre – about a half that of petrol or diesel. But it does have its drawbacks – see 'Green machines', p26, for more about LPG and other alternative fuels.

CAR TAX

Tax isn't really a major running cost, compared with fuel and depreciation. But it can seem a lot when the tax reminder arrives from the DVLA. The introduction of graduated vehicle duty means that choosing a car in the right tax bracket can save you £80 or more a year. All new cars fall into one of five tax bands (the lowest A to the highest E) based on their carbon dioxide emissions.

If you have a car that was first registered before March 2001, tax will be based on engine size. Cars with engines less than 1550cc (1.55 litres) are currently taxed at £105 a year, while bigger engines have a duty of £160.

There are more details of tax bandings on the DVLA's website at www.dvla.gov.uk.

INSURANCE

It's tempting to just renew your car insurance with your existing company. This might be the easiest option, but it may not be the cheapest. Insurance quotes can vary by more than 100 per cent for the same car and circumstances. So always get quotes from at least a handful of companies, bearing in mind that what was cheapest last year may not be cheapest this time – particularly if you've changed your car or job, or if you've moved house.

Each car is rated by the insurance industry according to factors such as its desirability to thieves, how secure it is and its likely repair costs. Choosing a car with a low insurance rating should reduce your premiums. A typical quote for a group 10-rated Peugeot 406 1.8 could be about £570, while a Ford Mondeo 1.8 LX, falling in group eight, should cost about £60 less for the same driver.

GARAGE COSTS

If you have a brand new car, or if you've bought a used car from a dealer, the chances are that it will have some form of warranty. Check the small print, as some insist that you have your car serviced by a franchised dealer rather than any garage of your choice.

But if you are able to choose where you get your car serviced, shop around. Independent garages typically cost a third less than franchised dealers, and the quality of their service is no worse than that from a dealer. Even if you are tied to the manufacturer's network, it may still be worth shopping around – prices can easily vary by £50 or more for the same service even among dealers.

You should also ring around for prices for routine replacement items. We found that even prices for a particular model of tyre can vary by more than 40 per cent between outlets.

BEST AND WORST

Here are the cars which are cheapest and most expensive to run, according to our calculations (see 'Rating running costs', below).

SUPERMINI
CHEAPEST
VW Lupo
MOST EXPENSIVE
Skoda Fabia

MEDIUM
CHEAPEST
Nissan Almera, **Seat** Leon, **Daewoo** Lanos
MOST EXPENSIVE
Mercedes-Benz A-class

LARGE
CHEAPEST
Mitsubishi Carisma
MOST EXPENSIVE
Saab 9-3, **Audi** A4, **Mercedes-Benz** C-class

LUXURY
CHEAPEST
Saab 9-5, **Volvo** S80
MOST EXPENSIVE
Jaguar XJ series

MPV
CHEAPEST
Citroën Xsara Picasso, **Renault** Scénic, **Vauxhall** Zafira
MOST EXPENSIVE
Mercedes-Benz M-class

OFF-ROADER
CHEAPEST
Honda HR-V
MOST EXPENSIVE
Jeep Grand Cherokee

RATING RUNNING COSTS

We've included running cost ratings for each new model in *Which? Car 2002*. Our calculations are for a car bought new and kept for three years, covering 12,000 miles a year. We compared cars within each class. Costs can vary across a model range, so we've given a typical rating for the range.

For more detailed running costs, see the Which? Online running costs database at **www.which.net**. It has details for over 3,000 cars.

Our ratings take account of the following factors.

■ **Fuel consumption** We've used the official 'combined' fuel consumption figures, and fuel prices from the AA.

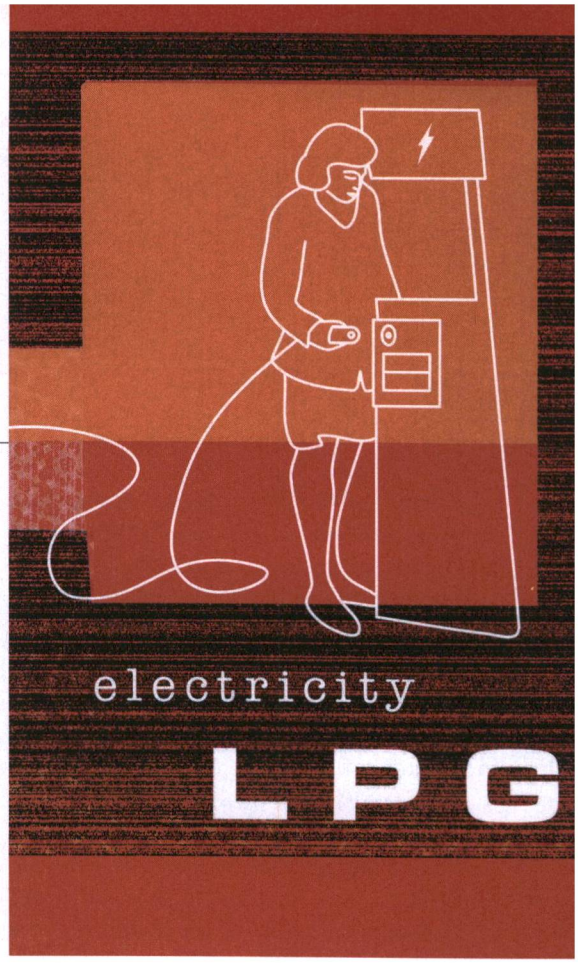
■ **Annual road tax** is based on the new banding system using official emissions figures.

■ **Insurance** We've used typical quotes from an insurance database.

■ **Depreciation** is based on expert predictions on the resale values of the cars.

■ **Finance costs** are based on a cash flow calculation and include loss of interest on the amount of equity you have tied up.

GREEN MACHINES



With company car tax now linked to CO_2 emissions, we look at a few alternatives to petrol and diesel worth considering

Last year the government took a new step to encourage people to consider more environmentally-friendly cars. Car tax for new cars was adjusted to take carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions into account. And this year, the amount of company car tax people pay takes into account their car's CO_2 emissions.

With the increasing number of cars on the road, emissions are a major source of pollution, but there are both environmental and financial incentives to reduce this. (Two fifths of people in our motoring survey said they took account of CO_2 emissions when buying a car.) But there are some 'greener' alternatives to these polluting fuels.

LPG

LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) is a mixture of propane and butane. It's a relatively cheap fuel (about 36p a litre) because of the lower duty imposed on it. But, although it's about half the price of petrol, you get about 20 per cent fewer miles to the gallon.

LPG emissions are lower than traditional fuels and LPG causes less engine wear. It can be transported and stored as liquid, and is less dangerous than petrol. On the downside, LPG vehicles are often less powerful than their petrol counterparts.

Many cars can be converted to run on LPG, or to be dual fuel (so that they run on petrol and LPG). Several popular models, including the Vauxhall Vectra and Zafira, are also available as dual-fuel vehicles. But LPG isn't a cheap option: you can expect to pay around £2,000 more than an equivalent petrol car for a dual-fuel model. And converting a car to dual fuel typically costs around £1,500. However, you might be able to get a PowerShift Grant, a government scheme to encourage alternative fuel takeup – see 'Help with going green', opposite.

HYBRID CARS

Hybrid cars have a petrol engine and an electric motor. The electric motor's batteries are charged when the car is braking, decelerating or cruising, so you don't need to recharge it at a power point. The motor assists the engine when it has to work hard – when starting off or going uphill, for example.

It is possible to convert a car to run as a hybrid, but it's easier to buy a hybrid model. There are two on the market in the UK. The Honda Insight, launched two years ago, is a two-seater coupé, the Toyota Prius a more conventional four-door saloon. Both models sell for around £17,000 and fuel consumption is as much as 30 per cent lower than equivalent petrol cars.

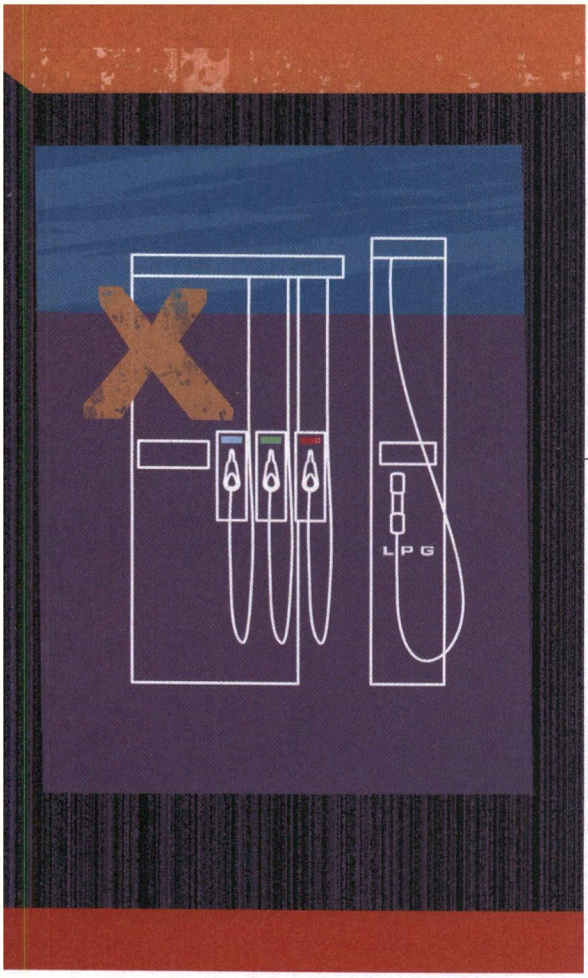
One distinct advantage of hybrid cars is that they have no special refuelling problems, because they still use petrol – they just do so in smaller quantities. However, the choice of models is limited and they are expensive to buy.

ELECTRICITY

The promise of quiet, non-polluting electric vehicles has been with us for many years, but it remains one that is largely unfulfilled. In theory, you can buy an electric car, but they are not widely available and too impractical for most private motorists.

Peugeot makes an electric version of the 106 supermini, but it's sold to businesses and isn't available to private individuals. Ford recently launched its Th!nk city car, but you can't buy one – you have to lease it over a three-year period for £325 a month (plus VAT).

Despite ongoing research, the battery technology used for electric vehicles still has many drawbacks. Electric cars are less powerful than



their petrol counterparts, partly because the batteries are so heavy and bulky. They can also be expensive to replace (and disposing of them if they are not recycled simply creates another environmental problem). And their short range between recharges means that their use is pretty much limited to cities.

Should some of these disadvantages be sorted out, there are many attractions of electric power. Electricity is, of course, widely produced and widely available. You simply need to plug an electric car into a domestic mains supply for around seven hours to refuel it. An electric vehicle can be recharged from virtually any standard 13-amp socket anywhere.

Running costs depend on the electricity tariff, but generally, refuelling is reasonably priced, especially if you can take advantage of off-peak rates. Also, electric vehicles have lower fuel and maintenance costs than petrol equivalents. Maintenance costs for electric vehicles are low because they have fewer moving parts to service and replace.

Electric vehicles are quiet and produce no emissions on the road. However, they do indirectly produce emissions, at the power station – unless you are on a 'green' tariff where the electricity used to recharge the batteries is generated by wind, solar or wave power.

NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is a mixture of hydrocarbons, mainly methane, and comes in two forms: compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Per unit of energy, natural gas contains less carbon than any other fossil fuel, which means it produces lower CO_2 emissions per kilometre travelled. Natural gas vehicles also operate quietly. But refuelling a natural gas vehicle can take up to six hours (though there are now some high-tech stations which can refuel a vehicle in much the same time as a conventional car). Large, heavy fuel tanks limit vehicle range.

One disadvantage of natural gas is that it needs a relatively large fuel tank, which is likely to eat into boot space.

Several cars can be converted to run on natural gas, including models from Mercedes-Benz and Volvo, but you can't yet buy a natural gas car. Alternatively, some cars can be converted to dual-fuel cars, which run on natural gas and petrol (or, more rarely, diesel). As with LPG, the cost of a natural gas or dual-fuel car is around £2,000 more than a regular model.

Natural gas has much more limited availability than LPG: there are only around 20 public filling stations around the country for natural gas, compared with 1,100 for LPG. This fact alone rules it out for most people.

STICKING WITH PETROL OR DIESEL

Despite the benefits of the different types of alternative fuels, there are still distinct practical disadvantages, and most of us choose petrol or diesel cars. But you can still be more environmentally friendly by choosing a car with lower emissions, and being aware of how you can reduce emissions. See 'Contacts', p66, for websites which have more information on this.

HELP WITH GOING GREEN

PowerShift, run by the Energy Savings Trust, offers grants to help with the extra cost of buying a clean-fuel vehicle or converting an existing one.

There are grants available for CNG, LNG, LPG and electric vehicles (including hybrid vehicles).

PowerShift has an online database of vehicles which are eligible for a grant. It offers grants for between 30 and 75 per cent of the cost of the vehicle or conversion, depending on how clean the vehicle or conversion is and the age of your vehicle.

Last year, the grant scheme was extended to include vehicles up to five years old.

If you are interested in applying for a grant, you can get an application form at: **www.est-powershift.org.uk**, or through the post by calling **0845 602 1425**.

FIRST LOOK

In our annual survey, we ask for details of owners' motoring experiences over a 12-month period. This means that some new models don't make it to our main car summaries. We've asked a range of owners of some new models for their views about their cars

ALFA ROMEO 147

Prices new £12,995 (1.6 Turismo) to £17,660 (2.0 TS Selespeed Lusso)
Dimensions 4.17m x 1.73m
Engines 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol
Fuel consumption 31.7 to 34.4mpg
Alfa Romeo reliability Poor
Secondary safety Fair
Security (theft from car) 3/10

Most owners fell for the 147 as soon as they saw it – it seems buying it was an emotional decision and our owners seem willing to forgive its faults.

Most owners thought the 147 impressively comfortable and that it was a good all-rounder and suited to long journeys. They liked the adjustable steering wheel and the brakes and felt safe and secure when the car was cornering. The car was fun, easy to drive, and the handling was excellent.

Most owners experienced some problems with their car. These included a faulty rear window washer, a problem with the ABS brakes, the dashboard display and the radio. One owner's car had an engine failure.

LEXUS RX300

Prices new £28,770 (3.0 auto) to £35,810 (3.0 SE auto)
Dimensions 4.58m x 2.07m inc mirrors
Engines 3.0 litre petrol
Fuel consumption 21.7mpg
Lexus reliability Among the best
Secondary safety Not assessed
Security (theft from car) Not assessed

As the first off-roader from luxury car maker, Lexus, owners of the RX300 think the interior is comfortable and spacious, while the car feels rugged. They were impressed with the level of standard equipment, including satellite navigation and climate-control systems. They liked the navigation system, though some drivers thought it might be distracting to use while driving.

The car felt safe to drive. Owners were pleased and surprised by the acceleration, which is better than they expected for this size and type of car. They thought the four-wheel-drive system makes this car ideal for country driving and the luxury-car feel also make it suitable for longer journeys, though its suspension and steering is less well suited to town driving.

Fewer than half of our owners said they'd had problems with their RX300s. Those that did said they were minor and were generally dealt with well by a dealer.

MINI

Prices new £10,155 (1.6 One) to £14,320 (1.6 Cooper S)
Dimensions 3.63m x 1.93m
Engine 1.6 litre petrol
Fuel consumption 33.6 to 43.5mpg
Mini reliability Insufficient data
Secondary safety Fair
Security (theft from car) 5/10

The Mini certainly isn't a run-of-the-mill car and has a lot of the original Minis in its style.

Most owners found the Mini's 1.6-litre engine responsive and the car easy to drive. Some were surprised at how comfortable the car was on motorways. Most were happy with the fuel economy, too.

Space in the front was adequate, though some people found getting in and out of the back a bit awkward (several commented that the seat release mechanism was fiddly). There isn't much room in the back and the car is short on boot space, but most owners expected that. The small rear view mirror drew criticism.

Opinions were divided over the firm suspension, but there was agreement that the brakes were excellent.

Owners reported quite a few problems. Some were potentially serious, including a sticking throttle and a leaky battery, while others were minor.

SMART

Prices new £5,575 (0.6 Pure) to £9,870 (0.6 Passion cabriolet)
Dimensions 2.50m x 1.74m inc mirrors
Engine 0.6 litre
Fuel consumption 60.1mpg
Smart reliability Insufficient data
Secondary safety Not assessed
Security (theft from car) Not assessed

The quirky Smart car is fun to drive and is a real head turner. Its two seats are enough for singles or couples with minimal load-carrying needs, or it may make a good second car.

Some found the automatic gearbox a little sluggish when pulling away, but this is less of a problem if the semi-automatic mode is used.

Smart is ideally suited to short trips around town. But owners were also happy with the performance on motorway journeys and even trips abroad. Its size and manoeuvrability mean it can be parked in spaces you couldn't consider in most other cars.

Some thought the engine could benefit from some sound-proofing. Servicing and maintenance are cheap, though Smart dealers are fairly thin on the ground.

TOYOTA AVENSIS VERSO

Prices new £17,615 (2.0 VVT-i GS) to £20,620 (2.0 D-4D GLS)
Dimensions 4.65m x 1.76m
Engines 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Fuel consumption Petrol 32.8mpg; diesel 43.5mpg
Toyota reliability Among the best
Secondary safety Good
Security (theft from car) 3/10

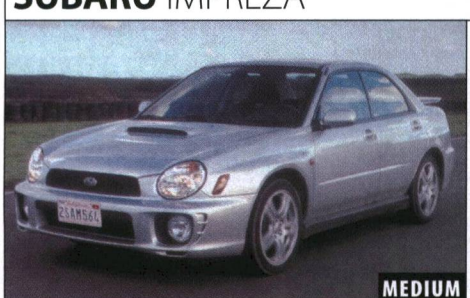
The Avensis Verso is a six-seater small MPV version of the popular the Avensis range.

Owners were pleased with space and access, but rearward visibility is a problem – several owners said that the rear head restraints interfere with the view. A few also mentioned that the rear pillar created an obstruction.

The suspension provided good ride comfort and the car had effective brakes. Acceleration was smooth, whatever the load, and the car was easy and enjoyable to drive. All our owners thought the car was good value for money. Fuel consumption is seen as pretty good for a car of this type, too.

Most owners had minor problems with their cars, including squeaks and rattles, a fault with a seat and an over-sensitive alarm. However, all were happy with how dealers put these right.

SUBARU IMPREZA



Prices new £13,770 (1.6 TS AWD) to £27,315 (2.0 WRX STi Prodrive)
Dimensions 4.41m x 1.73m
Engines 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol
Fuel consumption 23.3 to 31.7mpg
Subaru reliability Good
Secondary safety Fair
Security (theft from car) 3/10

The Impreza's performance is its biggest attraction – it offers sports car performance at saloon car price. The Impreza comes as a saloon or estate. It isn't a luxury car, but has a reasonable interior. In particular, all owners praised the seats, though some had problems getting in and out because of their low position. But there is plenty of space, and an impressively large boot for a car of this size.

The acceleration and the four-wheel-drive were praised, and the brakes were described as 'magnificent'. The Impreza was judged excellent for cross-country, rural driving. Some thought the car was a bit thirsty, though they accepted this for the performance it delivered. All owners thought the Impreza was good value for money.

VOLVO S60

Prices new £19,815 (2.0 T S) to £26,115 (2.3 SE T5)
Dimensions 4.58m x 2.06m (inc mirrors)
Engine sizes 2.0, 2.3 and 2.4 litre petrol, 2.4 litre bi-fuel (LPG/petrol or CNG/petrol), 2.4 litre diesel
Fuel consumption (mpg) Petrol 28.0 to 30.7mpg; LPG bi-fuel 21.9 (LPG) to 30.7mpg (petrol); CNG bi-fuel 28.2 (CNG) to 30.7mpg (petrol); diesel 37.2 to 43.5mpg
Volvo reliability Average
Secondary safety Very good
Security (theft from car) 5/10

The S60 was praised as a comfortable, quiet saloon that is good to drive.

Owners were impressed by features such as the the automatic dimming rear view mirror. The seats were very comfortable and the car had excellent forward visibility, though the rear view was restricted by the central rear head restraint. Three owners said they found the car hard to park because of its size. The boot is spacious, though one owner thought the opening was a bit small.

The acceleration, ride and handling were all good and the car was quiet at motorway speeds. The 'Geartronic' transmission (automatic with a manual mode) helped make the car good for town driving as well, though some owners felt that around town the fuel consumption was poor.

USING THE SUMMARIES

Start here to make the most of the fact-packed summaries of 140 models, starting opposite

The detailed information in our car summaries is mostly based on the results of our annual motoring survey. First, we give basic details for each model: what you can expect to pay, the body styles and engine options.

Second, we give owners' verdicts on their cars. We asked owners to rate around 50 day-to-day aspects, covering driving ease and pleasure, space for people and luggage, seat and ride comfort, noise, as well as running costs, including servicing, insurance and replacement parts costs.

Finally, we give crucial reliability information. The reliability ratings are based on information owners have given us about any breakdowns, problems or faults their car has suffered in the previous 12 months. And the troublespots lists those particular problems that have been mentioned by a higher-than-average proportion of owners.

BMW 3-SERIES — from Sep 98

LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr sal, 5-dr est, 2-dr coupé/conv, 3-dr hatch
Engines 1.9, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8 or 3.0 litre petrol, 2.0 or 2.9 dsl
Prices new £16,100 (316 Ti Compact) to £32,690 (330 Ci Sport Convertible)
Dimensions 4.48m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cylinder head/head gasket (petrol), lights, cooling system (petrol), air conditioning, heating, ventilation, clutch
1997 to 1999 Cooling system (petrol), air conditioning, heating/ventilation, airbags

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Gear change, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, driving pleasure, noise, headlights, styling, interior design, trim quality, noise (petrol), fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, seat belts, ease of driving, ease of folding rear seats (estate), ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, view out, wipers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning
Poor Rear room, ease of loading (saloon), boot space (estate), insurance costs, servicing costs (diesel)
Very poor Boot space (saloon), cost of replacement parts (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

CAR CLASS

To help you compare cars of a similar type, we group each model into one of eight classes, from superminis to luxury cars, off-roaders and coupés. For more about our car classes, see 'Best Buys', p4.

TROUBLESPOTS

The troublespots come from our survey of members, and include those that were mentioned most frequently by owners. As with reliability ratings, we give troublespots for three age groups of car.

RELIABILITY

Our reliability ratings come from our survey of members – see 'Reliability rated', p16, for more about the survey and results. We give ratings for breakdowns, problems and faults for three age groups of car, as follows:
★ better than average
○ average
● worse than average
A dash means either that the car wasn't built at that time, or that there were too few models of this age in our survey.

DETAILS

Body styles shows whether the car is available as a hatchback, saloon or estate, for example
Engines tells you which petrol and diesel engines are available
Prices gives the range of new list prices (for current models) and a rough guide of prices of used-only models
Dimensions gives the length and width (including mirrors, where stated) for the smallest car in the range
Running costs see 'Car running costs', p24, for how this is worked out (for current models only)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

We asked car owners to rate more than 50 aspects of their car. We analysed all the owners' ratings and picked out those that were rated better than average (very good or good) and worse than average (poor or very poor). We have not listed those aspects that were rated average. To make a fair comparison, we compared each car only with others in the same class, so a supermini's ratings were compared with other superminis, medium cars with other medium cars, and so on.

ALFA ROMEO 156

from Jan 98

LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6,1.8, 2.0, 2.5 or 3.2 litre petrol, 2.4 litre diesel
Prices new £14,430 (1.6) to £27,720 (3.2 GTA estate)
Dimensions 4.43m x 1.9m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Lights, electrical equipment/accessories, automatic transmission, gearbox or differential, gears/clutch, braking system, suspension, interior fittings, paintwork
1997 to 1999 Lights, gearbox or differential, braking system, suspension, seats/seat adjusters, carpets/upholstery

OWNERS' VERDICTS

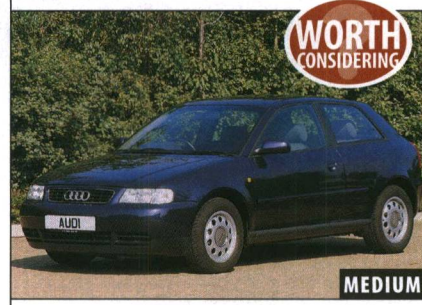
Very good Gear change, styling, interior design
Good Steering, stability at speed, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, seat comfort
Poor Ease of parking, rear view, windscreen wipers, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts
Very poor Rear room, internal storage space, boot space and ease of loading boot (saloon), insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	○	–
Problems	●	○	–
Faults	●	●	–

AUDI A3

from Sep 96



MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £14,475 (1.6) to £24,640 (1.8 S3 quattro)
Dimensions 4.16m x 1.86m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Engine electrics
1997 to 1999 Electric windows

OWNERS' VERDICTS

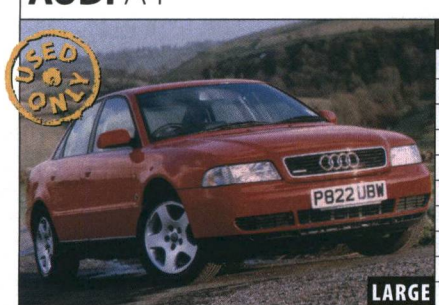
Very good Noise, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, view out, windscreen wipers, heating, fresh air ventilation, air conditioning, styling
Poor Rear shoulder room, getting in and out, fuel consumption
Very poor Rear leg- and headroom, cost of replacement parts, servicing and insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

AUDI A4

Mar 95 to Nov 00



LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.4, 2.6 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used around £4,800 to £24,000
Dimensions 4.48m x 1.85m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust, cylinder head/head gasket (petrol), engine electrics (petrol), cooling system (petrol), air conditioning (petrol), carpets/upholstery, exterior trim
1997 to 1999 Suspension, carpets/upholstery
1994 to 1996 Ignition system (petrol), air conditioning

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, instruments, position of switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving/parking, driving pleasure, ease of folding seats (estate), ride when cornering, noise, mirrors, view out, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, overall performance, noise (petrol)
Poor Rear head- and shoulder room, luggage space and ease of loading (estate), ease of DIY, fuel consumption (petrol), noise (diesel)
Very poor Rear legroom, insurance and servicing costs, cost of replacement parts

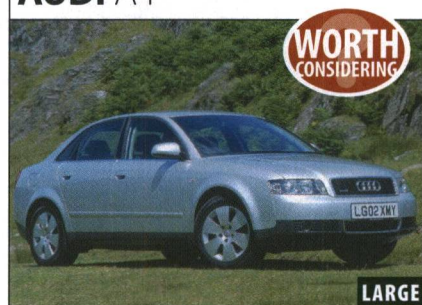
RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	○	○
Problems	●	○	○
Faults	●	★	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	●	–
Faults	–	○	–

AUDI A4

from Dec 00



LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.4 or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.5 dsl
Prices new £17,510 (1.6) to £26,740 (3.0 quattro Sport estate)
Dimensions 4.48m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs very high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Main engine components (diesel)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Noise, ventilation, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instruments, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, boot space (saloon), ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, air conditioning, styling, overall performance
Poor Rear shoulder room, insurance costs
Very poor Rear legroom

RELIABILITY

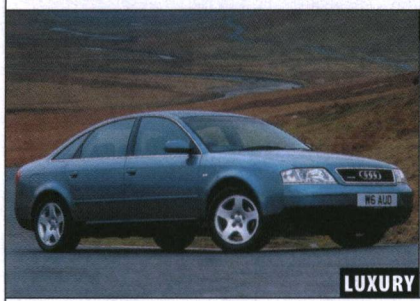
Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

AUDI A6/ALLROAD

from May 97



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8, 2.0, 2.4, 2.7, 3.0 or 4.2 litre ptrl, 1.9 or 2.5 dsl
Prices new £20,320 (2.0) to £47,340 (4.2 V8 S6 quattro estate)
Dimensions 4.80m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Main engine components, automatic transmission, seat belts, paint losing shine
1997 to 1999 Alarm/immobiliser, electric windows, central locking, stereo system, electrical equipment/accessories, automatic transmission, carpets/upholstery, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Internal storage space, boot space (saloon), fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Leg- and headroom (front and rear) rear shoulder room, ease of loading boot (saloon), styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Poor Steering, driver's seat support, driving position, ease of loading (estate), windscreen wipers, headlights
Very poor noise (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

AUDI TT

from Feb 99

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr coupé or 2-dr convertible
Engines 1.8 litre petrol.
Prices new £23,920 (1.8 quattro coupé) to £28,870 (1.8 quattro Roadster)
Dimensions 4.04m x 1.86m
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Main engine components, gears/clutch

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Internal storage space
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instruments, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, getting in and out, ease of loading boot, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, noise, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, trim quality
Very poor Rear room, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

BMW 3-SERIES

Apr 91 to Aug 98

DETAILS

Body styles 2-dr coupé/conv, 3-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 2.0, 2.5, 2.8 litre petrol, 1.7 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £23,000
Dimensions 4.5m x 1.71m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Cylinder head/head gasket, battery, central locking, heating/ventilation, steering, suspension
1994 to 1996 Steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

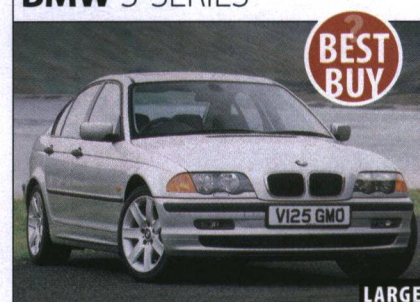
Very good Ease of parking, trim quality
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, instruments, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ease of folding rear seats (estate), ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, view out, wipers, headlights, ventilation, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks
Poor Front leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading, DIY
Very poor Rear leg- and headroom, boot space (hatchback, saloon and estate), cost of replacement parts and insurance

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

BMW 3-SERIES

from Sep 98



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr sal, 5-dr est, 2-dr coupé/conv, 3-dr hatch
Engines 1.9, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8 or 3.0 litre petrol, 2.0 or 2.9 dsl
Prices new £16,100 (316 Ti Compact) to £32,690 (330 Ci Sport Convertible)
Dimensions 4.48m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cylinder head/head gasket (petrol), lights, cooling system (petrol), air conditioning, heating, ventilation, clutch
1997 to 1999 Cooling system (petrol), air conditioning, heating/ventilation, airbags

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Gear change, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, driving pleasure, noise, headlights, styling, interior design, trim quality, noise (petrol), fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, seat belts, ease of driving, ease of folding rear seats (estate), ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, view out, wipers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning
Poor Rear room, ease of loading (saloon), boot space (estate), insurance costs, servicing costs (diesel)
Very poor Boot space (saloon), cost of replacement parts (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

BMW 5-SERIES

Sep 90 to Apr 96

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0 or 4.0 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used around £4,000 to £11,000
Dimensions 4.73m x 1.76m

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Alarm/immobiliser, battery, central locking, air conditioning, heating/ventilation

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Trim quality
Poor Steering, driver's seat adjustment, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, front leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space and ease of loading boot (saloon), seat comfort, mirrors, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating adjustment, fresh air ventilation, interior design
Very poor Rear leg- and headroom, internal storage space, heating, DIY, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	●

BMW 5-SERIES

from Apr 96

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8, 3.0, 3.5 or 4.4 litre petrol, 2.5 or 2.9 litre diesel
Prices new £23,360 (520i) to £42,320 (540i Sport est)
Dimensions 4.78m x 1.99m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Main engine components (diesel), lights, cooling system (petrol), air conditioning, heating, ventilation
1997 to 1999 Battery (petrol), engine electrics (petrol), electrical equipment/accessories, braking system, interior fittings, airbags

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, gear change, instruments, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, ride quality, noise, view out, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, overall performance, noise (petrol), fuel consumption
Poor Driver's seat adjustment, room in rear, luggage space (saloon and estate), ease of loading boot (saloon), insurance costs, cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	–
Problems	○	●	–
Faults	○	●	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

BMW 7-SERIES

Aug 94 to Feb 02

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 2.8, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.4, 5.0 or 5.4 litre petrol
Prices used £9,700 to £51,000
Dimensions 4.99m x 1.87m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Battery, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of parking, internal storage space, rear view
Good Overall performance, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, boot space (saloon), ride quality on corners, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, ventilation, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Very poor Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing and insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

BMW Z3

from Jan 97

DETAILS

Body styles 2-dr coupé, 2-dr convertible
Engines 1.9, 2.0, 2.2, 2.8, 3.0 or 3.2 litre petrol
Prices new £18,810 (1.8 Roadster) to £35,820 (3.2M Roadster)
Dimensions 4.03m x 1.76m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting, but BMWs overall are average for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rattles and squeaks
Good Brakes, driver's seat adjustment, ease of parking, ride quality, headlights, trim quality
Very poor Boot space

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

CHRYSLER VOYAGER

Mar 97 to Feb 01

DETAILS

Body styles MPV with 5 or 7 seats
Engines 2.0 or 3.3 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used around £9,000 to £18,500
Dimensions 4.74m x 1.94m

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting, but Chryslers overall are average for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

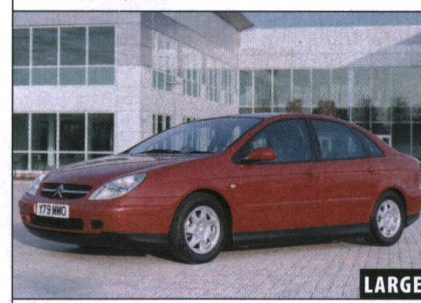
Very good Rear legroom, shoulder room in middle row, getting in and out, boot space
Good Driving seat adjustment, headroom in front, rear and middle row of seats, rear shoulder room, legroom in middle row, internal storage space, seat comfort, front view, styling, interior design, trim quality
Very poor Brakes, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

CITROËN C5

from Apr 01



DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8, 2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol, 2.0 or 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new £14,430 (1.8 LX) to £24,635 (3.0 Exclusive SE estate)
Dimensions 4.62m x 2.10m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cam/timing belt, automatic transmission, braking system, suspension

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear leg- and headroom, internal storage space, noise, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Good Brakes, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, front headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, headlights

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

CITROËN SAXO

from May 96

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.1, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.5 litre diesel
Prices new £6,570 (1.1 Forte 3-dr) to £11,630 (1.6i VTS)
Dimensions 3.74m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Main engine components, paint losing shine
1997 to 1999 Alarm/immobiliser, engine electrics

OWNERS' VERDICTS

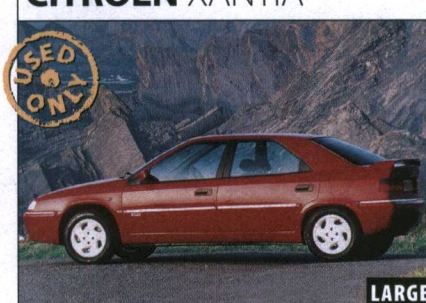
Good Boot space, ease of loading boot, noise, rear view, fuel consumption
Poor Driver's seat support, driving position, front leg- and headroom, headlights, ventilation, servicing costs
Very poor Brakes

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

CITROËN XANTIA

May 93 to Oct 00



DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback and estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9, 2.0 or 2.1 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £10,000
Dimensions 4.44m x 1.76m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Fuel system (diesel), seat belts
1997 to 1999 Exhaust/emission control system (petrol), alarm/immobiliser (diesel), battery/ignition system/engine electrics (diesel), switches/control stalks, cooling system (petrol), air conditioning, heating/ventilation, gears/clutch, brakes, suspension
1994 to 1996 Lights, electrical equipment/accessories, gears/clutch, brakes, suspension; diesel: cam/timing belt, main engine components, fuel system, battery

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Front headroom, room in rear, boot space/ease of loading (estate), ride quality
Poor Brakes, gear change, driver's seat support, driving position, instruments, switches/controls, ease of driving/parking, driving pleasure, internal storage, boot space and ease of loading (hatch), folding rear seats (hatch), noise, mirrors, view out, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim quality, overall performance, noise (dsl), cost of parts (dsl)
Very poor DIY, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption (petrol), parts costs (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	●	○
Faults	–	○	●

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	●
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	●	●

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

CITROËN XSARA

from Nov 97

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback and estate, 3-dr coupé
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.0 litre dsl
Prices new £10,230 (1.4LX) to £16,230 (2.0 VTS coupé)
Dimensions 4.17m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Clutch, airbags, interior fittings
1997 to 1999 Gearbox or differential

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Stability at speed, seat belt comfort, front headroom, internal storage space, boot space and ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, noise, windscreen wipers, ventilation, noise (petrol)
Poor Clutch, ease of parking, front view, overall performance (petrol)
Very poor Rear view, fitting spare wheel

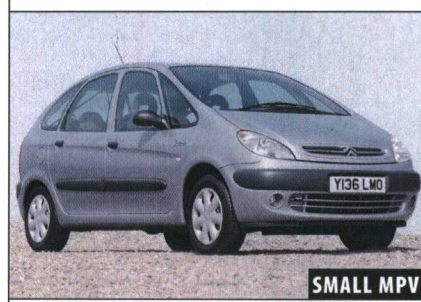
RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	●	–	–
Faults	●	–	–

CITROËN XSARA PICASSO

from Jun 00



SMALL MPV

DETAILS

Body styles small MPV with 5 seats
Engines 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £12,630 (1.6 LX) to £15,330 (2.0 HDi 90 Exclusive)
Dimensions 4.28m x 1.76m
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Stereo system, clutch

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Front headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, removing rear seats, windscreen wipers, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Brakes, driver's seat support, driving position, instruments, position of switches and controls, seat belts, driving pleasure, front legroom, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, rear view, headlights, ventilation, styling, interior design, noise (petrol), overall performance (diesel), servicing costs (diesel)
Poor Ease of parking, ride quality on corners, front view, heating, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor Fitting spare wheel

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

CITROËN ZX

Nov 91 to Jul 98

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.4, 1.8, 1.9 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £4,900
Dimensions 4.07m x 1.71m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system, battery, engine electrics, cooling system, braking system, steering
1994 to 1996 Cam belt/timing belt, main engine components, battery, engine electrics, cooling system, gears/clutch, braking system, steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instruments, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, heating, ventilation, overall performance (diesel)
Very poor Gear change, ease of folding seats (hatchback), wipers, headlights, styling, interior design, trim quality, DIY, fitting spare wheel, noise; petrol: fuel consumption and overall performance

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	●	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	●	●

DAEWOO LANOS

from Sep 97

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol or LPG
Prices new £7,315 (1.4 S) to £9,815 (1.6 SX)
Dimensions 4.07m x 1.86m inc mirrors
Running costs very low

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Rust, rainwater seals, airbags, seats/seat adjusters, carpets/upholstery, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Good Brakes, ease of parking, rear view
Poor Trim quality, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

DAEWOO LEGANZA

from Sep 97

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre petrol/LPG
Prices new £12,315 (SX) to £14,815 (CDX-E)
Dimensions 4.68m x 2.06m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting but Daewoos overall are average for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Driver's seat support and adjustment, position of switches and controls, room in rear, ease of loading boot, rear view, headlights, ventilation
Good Steering, driving position, instrument visibility, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, boot space, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, heating, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim quality

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

DAEWOO MATIZ

from Aug 98

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback
Engines 0.8 litre petrol
Prices new £6,470 (SE) to £7,570 (SE+)
Dimensions 3.50m x 1.87m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Exterior trim
1997 to 1999 Gearbox or differential, steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Steering, ease of parking, rear leg- and headroom, getting in and out, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing and insurance costs
Good Ease of driving, front headroom, rear shoulder room, rear view, styling
Poor Brakes, ride quality on straight, noise
Very poor Stability at speed, gear change, internal storage space, boot space

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

FIAT BRAVA/BRAVO

Dec 95 to Jan 02

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr hatchback (Bravo), 5-dr hatchback (Brava)
Engines 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used £2,700 to £8,200
Dimensions 4.03m x 1.76m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Main engine components, battery, engine electrics, stereo system, washers/wipers, braking system

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Poor Stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front and rear headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading and folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, view out, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, interior design, fuel consumption
Very poor Trim quality, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	●	–
Faults	–	○	–

FIAT CINQUECENTO

May 93 to Jun 98

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr hatchback
Engines 0.9 or 1.1 litre petrol
Prices used up to around £2,700
Dimensions 3.25m x 1.50m

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting but Fiats overall are poor for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Insurance costs
Good Fuel consumption
Poor Driving seat adjustment, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, front headroom, ease of folding rear seats and loading boot, front view
Very poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front legroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, wipers, heating, ventilation, headlights, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

FIAT MAREA

from Mar 97

LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon and 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.4 litre diesel
Prices new £11,815 (1.6SX) to £15,874 (2.0 HLX)
Dimensions 4.39m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system, electric windows, clutch, gears/clutch, braking system, steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

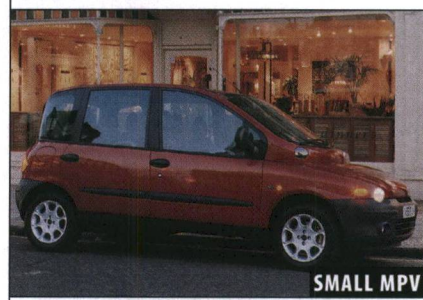
Good Heating adjustment, air conditioning
Poor Stability at speed, clutch, overall performance, driving position, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, headlights, rattles and squeaks
Very poor Trim quality

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

FIAT MULTIPLA

from Dec 99



SMALL MPV

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr MPV with 6 seats
Engines 1.6 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £12,815 (1.6 SX) to £15,715 (1.9 JTD ELX)
Dimensions 4.00m x 1.88m
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Fuel system, lights, washers/wipers, electrical accessories/ equipment, rainwater seals, seats/seat adjusters, seat belts, interior fittings, paintwork

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Instrument visibility, room in rear, getting in and out, removing rear seats, fuel consumption
Good Front leg- and headroom, internal storage space, mirrors, view out, headlights, interior design
Poor Heating
Very poor Styling, trim quality

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	●	–	–
Faults	●	–	–

FIAT PUNTO

Mar 94 to Sep 99

SUPERMINI

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr convertible
Engines 1.1, 1.2, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.7 diesel
Prices used around £1,800 to £7,000
Dimensions 3.76m x 1.62m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Cylinder head/ head gasket, main engine components, battery, electric windows, washers/wipers
1994 to 1996 Cylinder head/head gasket, gears/ clutch

OWNERS' VERDICTS

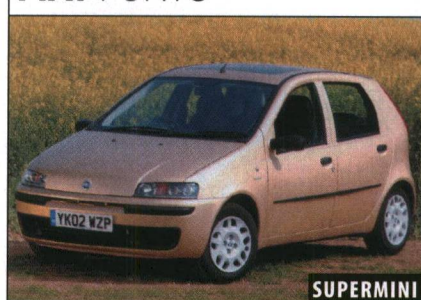
Very good Rear legroom
Good Rear head- and shoulder room, front legroom, getting in and out, boot space
Poor Brakes, overall performance, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, folding rear seats, ride quality on straight, seats, noise, mirrors, view out, wipers, heating adjustment, styling, interior design, trim quality, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of parts and servicing
Very poor Steering, stability at speed, clutch, gear change, ride quality on corners, headlights, heating, ventilation, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	●	○

FIAT PUNTO

from Oct 99



SUPERMINI

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.2 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £6,374 (1.2 Mia) to £13,319 (1.8 HGT Abarth)
Dimensions 3.84m x 1.81m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Clutch, steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Steering, room in rear, internal storage space, boot space
Good Driver's seat support and adjustment, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, front leg- and headroom, getting in and out, ease of loading boot, seat comfort, noise, headlights, styling, interior design, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption,
Poor Rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

FORD ESCORT/ORION

Sep 90 to Jul 00

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr convertible
Engines 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.8 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £7,400
Dimensions 4.30m x 1.88m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to1999 Dashboard switches/control stalks, washers/wipers, clutch, suspension
1994 to 1996 Dashboard switches/control stalks, washers/wipers, heating/ventilation, gears/clutch, steering, handles/locks, interior fittings, paintwork; diesel: cam/timing belt, main engine components, fuel system, battery, engine electrics

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of parts/servicing (diesel)
Good Boot space (hatchback), servicing costs (petrol), fuel consumption (diesel)
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, space, getting in and out, internal storage, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats (hatch), ride quality, seats, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, fuel consumption (petrol), performance (petrol)
Very poor Trim quality, rattles and squeaks, noise and performance (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	★	○
Faults	–	○	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	●
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

FORD FIESTA

Oct 95 to Mar 02

SUPERMINI

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.25, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6 litre petrol, 1.8 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £8,300
Dimensions 3.83m x 1.80m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Electric windows, paintwork
1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system, heating/ventilation
1994 to 1996 Handles/locks, carpets/upholstery, interior fittings, exterior trim

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of replacement parts
Good Clutch, gear change, servicing costs (petrol)
Poor Driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, front leg- and headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, seat comfort, mirrors, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs, fuel consumption (petrol), overall performance (diesel)
Very poor Rear legroom, fitting spare wheel, noise (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	★
Problems	★	○	○
Faults	○	○	★

FORD FOCUS

from Oct 98

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr est
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.8 dsl and LPG
Prices new £10,350 (1.4 CL) to £16,710 (1.8 TDCi Ghia Estate)
Dimensions 4.16m x 2.01m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None
1997 to 1999 Rust, heating/ventilation, paintwork, exterior trim

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving, driving pleasure, space, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space/ease of loading (estate), ride quality, seats, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, DIY, insurance costs, overall performance, noise (petrol)
Poor Rear view
Very poor Boot space (hatchback)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	★	★	–
Problems	★	○	–
Faults	★	★	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

FORD GALAXY

from Jun 95

MPV

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr MPV with 5, 6 or 7 seats
Engines 2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £18,065 (2.3 LX) to £25,065 (2.8 Ghia auto)
Dimensions 4.62m x 2.15m
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Handles/locks, Cylinder head/head gasket (petrol), cooling system (petrol)
1997 to 1999 Lights, electrical equipment/accessories, air conditioning, heating/ventilation, airbags, handles/locks, seats/seat adjusters, interior fittings, paintwork, alarm immobiliser (petrol), engine electrics (petrol)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of replacement parts, fuel consumption (diesel), servicing costs (diesel)
Good Clutch, gear change, servicing costs (petrol), overall performance (diesel)
Poor Instrument visibility, rear headroom, boot space, mirrors, view out, windscreen wipers, air conditioning, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, noise (diesel)
Very poor Fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption (petrol)

RELIABILITY

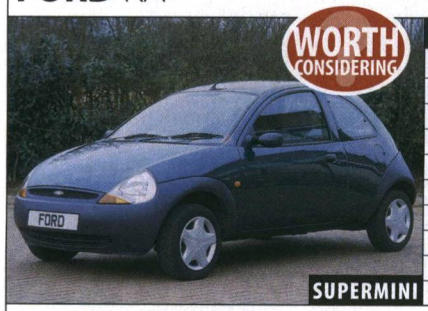
Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	–
Problems	●	●	–
Faults	●	●	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	●	–
Faults	○	●	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

FORD KA

from Sep 96



DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr hatchback
Engines 1.3 litre petrol
Prices new £6,350 (1.3i) to £7,350 (1.3i Style)
Dimensions 3.62m x 1.83m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Suspension
1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system, central locking, handles/locks

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Styling, interior design, cost of replacement parts and servicing
Good Steering, stability at speed, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, heating, ventilation, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Poor Rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading boot, fitting spare wheel
Very poor Rear legroom, boot space

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	★	★	–
Problems	★	★	–
Faults	★	○	–

FORD MONDEO

Feb 93 to Oct 00

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.5 litre petrol, 1.8 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £11,900
Dimensions 4.48m x 1.93m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust, washers/wipers, electrical equipment/accessories, gears/clutch, brakes, steering, suspension, rainwater seals, seats/adjusters, seat belts
1997 to 1999 Central locking, washers/wipers, heating/ventilation, air conditioning, suspension, paintwork; diesel: cam/timing belt, main engine components, fuel system
1994 to 1996 Numerous, including engine and electrics (diesel), fuel system, brakes, steering and suspension

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel), cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Good Boot space/loading/folding rear seats (estate), insurance costs
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving/parking, driving pleasure, rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, folding rear seats (hatch), ride, seats, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim quality, performance, noise and fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor Rattles/squeaks, noise (diesel)

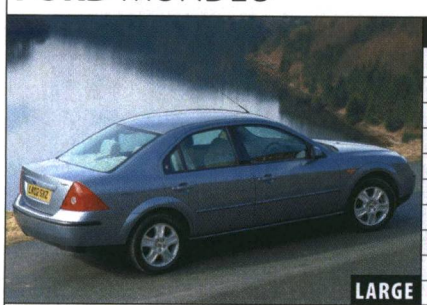
RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	●
Faults	○	○	●

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	●
Problems	–	○	●
Faults	–	○	●

FORD MONDEO

from Oct 00



DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatch or estate and 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.8, 2.0 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.0 diesel
Prices new £14,480 (1.8 LX 4-dr) to £22,565 (3.0 ST 220 estate)
Dimensions 4.74m x 1.94m
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust, cylinder head/head gasket (diesel), cam/timing belt (diesel), main engine components (diesel), heating/ventilation, gears/clutch, steering, seat belts, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear legroom, cost of replacement parts and servicing (petrol)
Good Stability at speed, front headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space/ease of loading/ease of folding rear seats (estate), ride quality on corners, front view, windscreen wipers, ease of DIY, insurance costs, internal storage space, noise (petrol)
Poor Mirrors, heating, air conditioning, trim quality
Very poor noise (diesel)

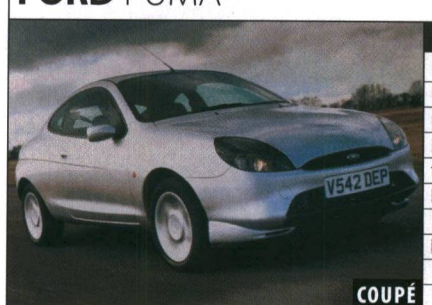
RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

FORD PUMA

from Jun 97



DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr coupé
Engines 1.6 or 1.7 litre petrol
Prices new £12,115 (1.6) to £13,830 (1.7)
Dimensions 3.99m x 1.84m
Running costs very low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Electric windows, electrical equipment/accessories
1997 to 1999 Battery

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Stability at speed, gear change, overall performance, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, styling, interior design, cost of replacement parts
Good Steering, brakes, clutch, driver's seat support, ease of driving, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, heating, ventilation, rattles and squeaks
Poor Front headroom, internal storage space, mirrors, headlights, fuel consumption
Very poor Ease of parking, room in rear, getting in and out, view out, fitting spare wheel, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

FORD SCORPIO

Jan 95 to Jun 98

LUXURY

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 2.3 or 2.9 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used around £1,500 to £8,600
Dimensions 4.83m x 1.88m

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Air conditioning, heating/ventilation, automatic transmission, steering, rainwater seals

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of replacement parts and servicing
Good Rear legroom
Poor Stability at speed, overall performance, front headroom, ride quality on corners
Very poor Noise, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	●
Faults	–	–	○

HONDA ACCORD/AERODECK

Apr 93 to Jun 98

LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé
Engines 1.8, 2.0, 2.2 or 2.3 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £7,800
Dimensions 4.68m x 1.73m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system
1994 to 1996 Exhaust or emission control system, electric windows

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good noise, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel
Poor Ease of parking, front headroom, getting in and out, boot space and ease of loading (saloon), insurance costs
Very poor Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	★
Problems	–	★	○
Faults	–	○	○

HONDA ACCORD

from Jul 98

LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr coupé
Engines 1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.3 or 3.0 litre petrol
Prices new £13,815 (1.8i VTEC) to £22,265 (2.2i Type R)
Dimensions 4.60m x 1.93m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Washers/wipers, electrical equipment/accessories
1997 to 1999 Seat belts

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, ease of driving, driving pleasure, rear shoulder room, ease of folding rear seats and loading boot (hatchback), boot space and ease of loading (saloon), ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, insurance costs
Poor Getting in and out
Very poor Fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	○	★	–
Faults	○	★	–

HONDA CIVIC

Mar 95 to Dec 00

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé
Engines 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used around £3,400 to £10,300
Dimensions 4.33m x 1.70m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust, exhaust or emission control system, gears/clutch, suspension
1997 to 1999 None
1994 to 1996 Exhaust or emission control system,

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel
Poor Front headroom, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), rear view, insurance costs
Very poor Getting in and out, cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	★
Problems	○	★	★
Faults	○	★	★

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

HONDA CIVIC

from Dec 00

DETAILS

Body styles 3- or 5-dr hatchback or 2-dr coupé
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.7 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.7 litre diesel
Prices new £9,870 (1.4 E) to £15,815 (2.0 Type R)
Dimensions 4.44m x 1.93m
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Gear change, room in rear, noise, windscreen wipers, rattles and squeaks
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, getting in and out, ease of folding rear seats and loading, ride quality, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, seats, mirrors, front view, headlights, styling, interior design, trim quality, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Poor Servicing costs
Very poor Cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	★	–	–
Problems	★	–	–
Faults	★	–	–

HONDA CR-V

Jun 97 to Jan 02

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0 litre petrol
Prices used from around £8,700 to £16,000
Dimensions 4.52m x 1.75m
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Paint losing shine
1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear legroom, getting in and out, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, cost of replacement parts and servicing
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, front leg- and headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, internal storage space, boot space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, view out, heating, styling, trim quality, fuel consumption, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	★	★	–
Faults	★	★	–

HONDA HR-V

from Feb 99

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6 litre petrol
Prices new £13,515 (1.6i 3-dr) to £15,215 (1.6 CVT 5-dr)
Dimensions 4.01m x 2.00m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Steering, overall performance, ease of parking, ride quality on corners, noise, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption, servicing costs
Good Stability at speed, brakes, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ease of folding rear seats, mirrors, heating, ventilation, styling, trim quality
Poor Boot space
Very poor Rear legroom

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

HYUNDAI ACCENT

Oct 94 to Dec 99

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.3 or 1.5 litre petrol
Prices used up to around £4,400
Dimensions 4.11m x 1.62m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Poor Steering, brakes, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, room in rear, internal storage space, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, windscreen wipers, ventilation, styling
Very poor Stability at speed, gear change, getting in and out, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

JAGUAR S-TYPE

from Oct 98

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 2.5, 3.0, 4.0 or 4.2 litre petrol
Prices new £24,770 (2.5 V6) to £47,220 (4.2 V8R Auto)
Dimensions 4.88m x 2.06m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Central locking, stereo system, electrical equipment/accessories, steering, rainwater seals
1997 to 1999 Alarm immobiliser, central locking, seats/seat adjusters

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Servicing costs
Good Steering, driving seat adjustment, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, noise, headlights, styling, interior design
Poor Front leg- and headroom, ease of loading boot, view out
Very poor Room in rear, internal storage space, boot space, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	★	–

JAGUAR XJ SERIES

from Sep 94

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 3.2 or 4.0 litre petrol
Prices new £35,770 (3.2 SE) to £51,770 (XJR8)
Dimensions 5.06m x 2.08m inc mirrors
Running costs very high

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 None
1994 to 1996 Heating/ventilation, automatic transmission, seats/seat adjusters

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, view out, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Poor Front leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, ease of loading boot, fitting spare wheel
Very poor Rear leg- and headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	★

JAGUAR X-TYPE

from Feb 01

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 2.0, 2.5 or 3.0 litre petrol
Prices new £19,815 (2.0) to £27,570 (3.0 V6 SE)
Dimensions 4.68m x 2.01m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Suspension, handles/locks

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Position of switches and controls, ease of parking, internal storage space, styling, interior design
Good Steering, stability at speed, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, getting in and out, boot space, ease of loading boot, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, rear view, windscreen wipers, ventilation, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Very poor Fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

JEEP CHEROKEE

Jan 93 to Sep 01

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr estate
Engines 2.5 or 4.0 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used around £5,300 to £16,000
Dimensions 4.24m x 1.79m

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting but Jeeps overall are poor for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of parking
Good Driving seat adjustment, ease of loading, rear view
Poor Stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, driving pleasure, front legroom, ride quality on corners, mirrors, styling
Very poor Position of switches and controls, front headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, noise, headlights, fuel consumption, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE

from Jan 96

OFF-ROADER

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr estate
Engines 4.0, 4.7, 5.2 or 5.9 litre petrol, 2.5, 2.7 or 3.1 litre diesel
Prices new £27,185 (4.0 Limited) to £33,815 (4.7 Overland Auto)
Dimensions 4.61m x 2.24m inc mirrors
Running costs very high

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Rust, air conditioning, heating/ventilation

OWNERS' VERDICTS

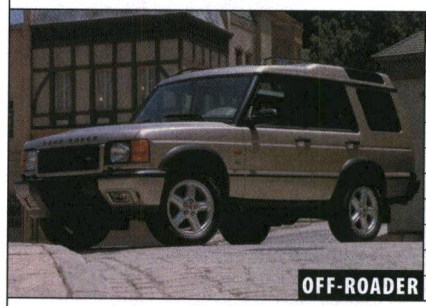
Very good Removing rear seats, noise, rear view, interior design
Good Driving seat adjustment, front legroom, boot space, ease of loading, ease of folding rear seats, seat comfort, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Poor Servicing costs
Very poor Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

LAND ROVER DISCOVERY

from Oct 98



OFF-ROADER

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 4.0 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new £21,815 (2.5 Td5) to £34,310 (V8 ES)
Dimensions 4.71m x 2.19m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Main engine components, fuel system, alarm/immobiliser, engine electrics, dashboard switches/control stalks, lights, central locking, washers/wipers, heating/ventilation, gearbox/ differential, seats/seat adjusters, interior fittings
1997 to 1999 Cylinder head/head gasket, cam/timing belt, main engine components, fuel system, battery, ignition system, electric windows, cooling system, heating/ventilation, automatic transmission, gears/clutch, rainwater seals, handles/locks, interior fittings
1994 to 1996 Rust, gearbox/differential, gears/clutch, airbags, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Internal storage space, boot space
Good Driver's seat comfort, front headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, ride quality on corners, heating adjustment, interior design
Poor Overall performance, instruments, switches and controls, ease of driving, ease of folding rear seats, noise, rear view, insurance costs
Very poor Gear change, ease of parking, getting in and out, ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, servicing costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	●	○
Problems	●	●	○
Faults	●	●	○

Reliability and troublespots information is also for pre-Oct 98 models

LAND ROVER RANGE ROVER

Sep 94 to Jan 02

OFF-ROADER

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr estate
Engines 4.0 or 4.6 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used from around £9,700 to £37,500
Dimensions 4.72m x 1.89m

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting but Land Rovers overall are poor for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear legroom, boot space, noise, rear view
Good Driver's seat comfort, driving position, instrument visibility, driving pleasure, front legroom, rear head- and shoulder room, ease of folding rear seats, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, heating, styling, interior design
Very poor Ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

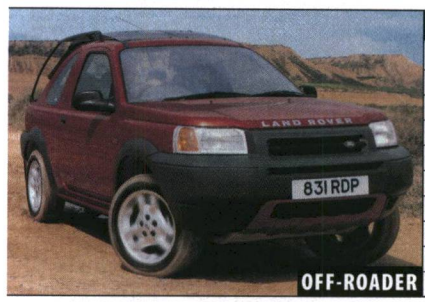
RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

LAND ROVER FREELANDER

from Oct 97



OFF-ROADER

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr estate, 3-dr soft top
Engines 1.8 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.0 diesel
Prices new £15,815 (1.8i S) to £24,415 (2.5 V6 ES)
Dimensions 4.39m x 2.08m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cylinder head/head gasket (petrol), main engine components, fuel system (petrol), exhaust or emission control system (petrol), engine electrics (petrol), dashboard switches/control stalks, electric windows, gears/clutch, braking system, steering, suspension, rainwater seals
1997 to 1999 Cylinder head/head gasket, main engine components, exhaust or emission control system, electric windows, stereo system, cooling system, air conditioning, gears/clutch, braking system, suspension

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Rear legroom, styling, fitting spare wheel, insurance costs
Poor Steering, gear change, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, front headroom, boot space, front view, heating adjustment, ventilation, trim quality, overall performance (petrol), noise (petrol)
Very poor Rear view, heating, air conditioning

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	●	–
Problems	●	●	–
Faults	●	●	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

LEXUS GS300

from Oct 93

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 3.0 litre petrol
Prices new £28,270 (3.0) to £33,280 (3.0 SE Navigator)
Dimensions 4.81m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting but Lexus overall are among the best for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Overall performance, driving seat adjustment, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, noise, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Very poor Boot space, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

LEXUS IS200/300

from Mar 99

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 3.0 litre petrol
Prices new £18,435 (2.0) to £30,610 (3..0 Sport Cross estate)
Dimensions 4.40m x 1.93m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

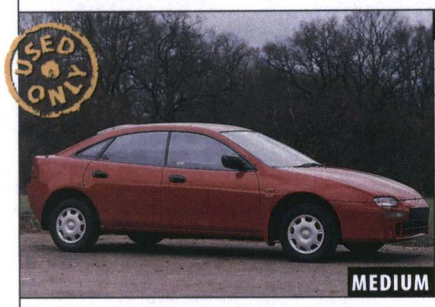
Very good Driving seat adjustment, instrument visibility, driving pleasure, noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, ventilation, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, servicing costs
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, getting in and out, ride quality, seat comfort, front view, headlights, heating, air conditioning
Poor Boot space (saloon), fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	★	–	–
Faults	★	–	–

MAZDA 323

Aug 94 to Oct 98



DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices used up to around £6,200
Dimensions 4.24m x 1.70m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Paintwork
1994 to 1996 Lights, gears/clutch

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Gear change, styling
Poor Driving position, front leg- and headroom, rear leg- and shoulder room, internal storage space, boot space (hatchback), mirrors, windscreen wipers, ventilation
Very poor Ease of parking, rear headroom, getting in and out, ease of loading (hatchback), rear view, headlights, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

MAZDA 323

from Oct 98

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 diesel
Prices new £9,830 (1.3 LXi) to £13,815 (2.0 Sport)
Dimensions 4.25m x 1.71m
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Exhaust or emission control system
1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, rear leg- and shoulder room, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, trim quality, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	★	○	–
Faults	○	★	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

MAZDA 626

Jun 97 to Jun 02

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 diesel
Prices used around £4,700 to £9,000
Dimensions 4.70m x 1.76m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None
1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, overall performance, front headroom, rear leg- and headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space and ease of loading boot (hatchback), headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, fitting spare wheel
Poor Ease of parking, noise, rear view, styling, interior design, cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	★	–

MAZDA MX-5

from Jan 90

DETAILS

Body styles 2-dr convertible
Engines 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol
Prices new £14,815 (1.6i) to £17,315(1.8i S)
Dimensions 4.02m x 1.83m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Gears/clutch
1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of parking, ease of DIY, cost of replacement parts, insurance costs
Good Gear change, driving pleasure, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption
Poor Driver's seat support, driving position, front leg- and headroom, getting in and out, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, interior design
Very poor Internal storage space, boot space

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	★	★	–
Faults	★	★	–

MERCEDES-BENZ A-CLASS

from Sep 98

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.4, 1.6 or 1.9 litre petrol, 1.7 litre diesel
Prices new £12,860 (A140) to £15,660 (A170 CDi)
Dimensions 3.61m (short wheelbase model) x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs very high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Engine electrics, electric windows, automatic transmission, braking system, seats/seat adjusters
1997 to 1999 Rust, steering, suspension, seats/seat adjusters

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Getting in and out
Good Clutch, gear change, driving seat adjustment, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of parking, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, ease of loading boot, noise, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, trim quality
Poor Stability at speed, position of switches and controls, ride quality
Very poor Boot space, ease of DIY, cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS

Oct 93 to Sep 00

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 or 2.8 litre petrol, 2.2 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used around £6,200 to £20,900
Dimensions 4.48m x 1.72m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Dashboard switches/control stalks, lights, electrical equipment/ accessories, automatic transmission
1994 to 1996 Alarm/ immobiliser, dashboard switches/control stalks, lights

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of parking, noise (petrol), fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, brakes, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality, mirrors, view out, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, overall performance (diesel)
Poor Rear legroom, internal storage space, boot space (saloon), ease of folding rear seats and loading (estate), insurance costs, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor Ease of DIY, cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	★	★
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS

from Sep 00

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate and 3-dr coupé
Engines 2.0, 2.3, 2.6 or 3.2 litre petrol, 2.1 or 2.7 diesel
Prices new £20,960 (C180) to £31,470 (C320 estate auto)
Dimensions 4.53m (saloon) x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs very high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Alarm/immobiliser (diesel), gearbox or differential

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of parking, noise, windscreen wipers, headlights, interior design, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption (diesel), noise (petrol)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front and rear headroom, rear shoulder room, internal storage, ease of loading (saloon), ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, rear view, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, trim quality, overall performance, noise (diesel)
Very poor Cost of replacement parts (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	★	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

MERCEDES-BENZ CLK

Jun 97 to Jun 02

DETAILS

Body styles 2-dr coupé or convertible
Engines 2.0, 2.3, 3.2 or 4.3 litre petrol
Prices used around £17,000 to £34,500
Dimensions 4.57m x 1.97m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust, electric windows, electrical equipment/accessories, seats/seat adjusters, paintwork

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, noise, rattles and squeaks
Good Brakes, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, front headroom, ease of loading, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, ventilation, interior design, trim quality
Very poor servicing costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	●	–	–
Faults	●	–	–

MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS

Oct 92 to Jun 96

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé or convertible
Engines 2.0, 2.2, 2.8, 3.2 or 5.0 litre petrol, 2.5 or 3.0 litre diesel
Prices used £6,200 to £18,700
Dimensions 4.65m x 1.88m

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Electric windows, air conditioning, steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fitting spare wheel
Good Driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, front legroom, getting in and out, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, heating adjustment, trim quality, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

MERCEDES-BENZ E-CLASS

Oct 95 to Aug 02

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 2.3, 2.4, 2.8, 3.2 or 4.3 litre petrol, 2.2, 2.5, 3.0 or 3.2 litre diesel
Prices used from £8,300
Dimensions 4.80m x 1.80m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Ignition system, automatic transmission, steering
1997 to 1999 Lights, electrical equipment/accessories, automatic transmission, paintwork, exterior trim
1994 to 1996 Airbags

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space (estate), ride quality, noise, mirrors, view out, headlights, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, overall performance (petrol), fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor Ease of DIY, cost of replacement parts and servicing

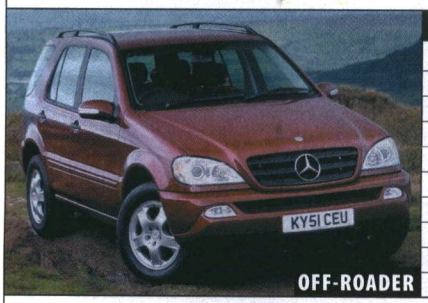
RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	★
Problems	○	●	○
Faults	○	○	○

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

MERCEDES-BENZ M-CLASS

from Apr 98



DETAILS

- **Body styles** 5-dr estate
- **Engines** 3.2 or 5.0 litre petrol, 2.7 litre diesel
- **Prices new** £28,610 (ML270 CDI) to £41,210 (ML500)
- **Dimensions** 4.59m x 2.19m
- **Running costs** very high

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting, but Mercedes-Benz overall are among the best for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Noise

Good Steering, stability at speed, driver's seat comfort, driving seat adjustment, driving position, front legroom, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, windscreen wipers, heating

Poor Ease of folding rear seats

Very poor Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

MERCEDES-BENZ SLK

from Nov 96

DETAILS

- **Body styles** 2-dr sports
- **Engines** 2.0, 2.3, or 3.2 litre petrol
- **Prices new** £24,610 (2.0) to £31,060 (3.2)
- **Dimensions** 4.01m x 1.72m
- **Running costs** high

TROUBLESPOTS

- **2000 to 2002** None
- **1997 to 1999** None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Getting in and out, noise, rear view

Good Brakes, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of parking, ease of loading boot, seat comfort, mirrors, heating, ventilation, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks

Poor Fuel consumption

Very poor Cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	★	–

MG F

from Sep 95

DETAILS

- **Body styles** 2-dr convertible
- **Engines** 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol
- **Prices new** £15,335 (1.6) to £20,815 (1.8 Trophy)
- **Dimensions** 3.91m x 1.78m
- **Running costs** low

TROUBLESPOTS

- **2000 to 2002** Cylinder head/head gasket, cooling system, seat belts
- **1997 to 1999** Cylinder head/head gasket, electric windows

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

Poor Stability at speed, brakes, gear change, overall performance, driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, boot space, noise, mirrors, heating adjustment

Very poor Internal storage space, noise, rear view, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

MITSUBISHI CARISMA

from Oct 95

DETAILS

- **Body styles** 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch
- **Engines** 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
- **Prices new** £9,360 (1.6 SE) to £13,815 (1.8 GDI Equippe)
- **Dimensions** 4.47m x 1.96m inc mirrors
- **Running costs** very low

TROUBLESPOTS

- **1997 to 1999** Main engine components, exhaust or emission control system, dashboard switches/control stalks, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption, servicing costs

Good Insurance costs

Poor Stability at speed, driver's seat support, driving position, driving pleasure, getting in and out, ride quality, seat comfort, noise

Very poor Noise, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

MITSUBISHI GALANT

from Mar 97

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 2.4 or 2.5 litre petrol
Prices new £15,815 (2.0 Classic) to £22,065 (2.5 V6-24 Elegance estate)
Dimensions 4.63m x 1.88m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Gearbox or differential, gears/clutch, steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of loading boot (saloon)
Good Overall performance, room in rear, internal storage space, boot space (saloon), seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, heating, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Poor Seat belt comfort
Very poor Insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

NISSAN ALMERA

Oct 95 to Feb 00

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.4, 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,900 to £6,500
Dimensions 4.12m x 1.92m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 None
1994 to 1996 Heating/ventilation

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving and parking, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ride quality on corners, noise, mirrors, rear view, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Poor Getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading (hatchback), styling, interior design
Very poor Boot space (hatchback)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	★	★
Problems	–	★	○
Faults	–	★	★

NISSAN ALMERA

from Mar 00

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.5 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new £9,605 (1.5 E) to £14,245 (2.2 TD Sport+)
Dimensions 4.12m x 1.69m
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rainwater seals

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Internal storage space, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), noise
Good Steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, rear head- and shoulder room, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

NISSAN MICRA

from Jan 93

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.0, 1.3 or 1.4 litre petrol
Prices new £7,125 (1.0 S) to £11,820 (1.4 SE+)
Dimensions 3.71m x 1.78m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Automatic transmission
1997 to 1999 Interior fittings
1994 to 1996 Seat belts

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fitting spare wheel,
Good Brakes, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving and parking, rear headroom, noise, mirrors, view out, headlights, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Poor Stability at speed, front legroom, internal storage space, boot space, heating, styling, interior design

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	★	★	★
Faults	★	★	★

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

NISSAN PRIMERA

Nov 96 to Jan 02

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.8 or 2.0 litre LPG/petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used around £3,100 to £10,800
Dimensions 4.44m x 1.96m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Air conditioning, heating/ventilation
1997 to 1999 Paintwork

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of DIY
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, boot space and ease of folding rear seats and loading (hatchback), ride quality on corners, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating adjustment, ventilation, air conditioning, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, cost of parts and servicing, insurance costs
Poor Styling, interior design

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	★	–
Faults	○	★	–

PEUGEOT 106

from Sep 91

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.0, 1.1, 1.3, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.4 or 1.5 litre diesel
Prices new £6,470 (1.1 Zest 1) to £11,615 (1.6 GTi)
Dimensions 3.68m x 1.89m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cylinder head/head gasket (petrol)
1997 to 1999 Washers/wipers, main engine components (diesel), ignition system (diesel), engine electrics (diesel), cooling system (diesel)
1994 to 1996 Cylinder head/head gasket (diesel), main engine component (diesel), exhaust or emission control system (petrol), engine electrics (diesel), cooling system (diesel), interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Rear view
Poor Stability at speed, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving/parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear leg- and shoulder room, internal storage, ease of folding seats and loading, ride quality, seats, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, rattles/squeaks, ease of DIY, performance, parts costs
Very poor Steering, brakes, rear headroom, getting in and out, fitting spare wheel

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	○
Problems	★	○	○
Faults	○	○	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	●	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

PEUGEOT 206

from Oct 98

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatch, 5-dr est, 2-dr cabriolet
Engines 1.1, 1.4, 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.4, 1.9 or 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £7,870 (1.1 Style) to £16,015 (2.0 SE cab)
Dimensions 3.84m x 1.88m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cylinder head/head gasket (diesel), cam/timing belt (diesel), fuel system (diesel), alarm immobiliser (petrol), ignition system (petrol), engine electrics (petrol), stereo system, handles/locks, seat/seat adjusters, interior fittings, paint losing shine
1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Styling, interior design
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, driver's seat support, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, ease of loading, ride quality, seat comfort, mirrors, headlights, heating, ventilation, trim quality, overall performance, noise
Poor Driving seat adjustment, rear view, ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, insurance costs, fuel consumption (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	★	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

PEUGEOT 306

from Apr 93

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatch, 2-dr cabriolet, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.0 litre dsl
Prices Only cabriolet version available new, from £16,315
Dimensions 4.18m x 1.68m

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Fuel system (diesel), engine electrics (petrol), washers/wipers, electrical equipment/accessories, brakes
1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system (petrol), battery (petrol), engine electrics, ignition system (diesel), air conditioning, brakes, cooling system (diesel)
1994 to 1996 Alarm/immobiliser (petrol), engine electrics (diesel), central locking, cooling system, gears/clutch, brakes, airbags

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good instrument visibility, ease of parking, rear view, insurance costs
Poor Steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support and adjustment, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of folding rear seats and loading (hatchback), seat comfort, noise, mirrors, windscreen wipers, headlights, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, overall performance (petrol), fuel consumption (petrol), cost of parts (petrol)
Very poor Fitting spare wheel

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	●
Problems	○	●	○
Faults	○	○	●

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	●
Faults	●	○	○

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

PEUGEOT 307

from Apr 01

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.4, 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.4 or 2.0 diesel
Prices new £10,715 (1.4 Style) to £16,760 (2.0 SE SW estate)
Dimensions 4.21m x 1.99m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Dashboard switches/control stalks, seat belts

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Clutch, driver's seat support, front headroom, room in rear, internal storage space, seat comfort, noise, rear view, ventilation, styling, interior design, insurance costs

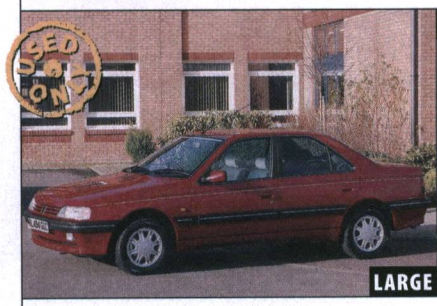
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, gear change, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, driving pleasure, front legroom, getting in and out, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality on corners, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, air conditioning, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

PEUGEOT 405

Jan 88 to Oct 97



LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 diesel
Prices used up to around £4,600
Dimensions 4.41m x 2.01m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Electric windows, air conditioning, heating/ventilation, clutch, gear box or differential, braking system, exterior trim, cam/timing belt (diesel), battery (diesel), cooling system (diesel)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Insurance costs, servicing costs (diesel), fuel consumption (diesel)

Good Ease of parking, rear legroom, boot space (saloon), rear view, cost of replacement parts (diesel)

Poor Steering, brakes, clutch, driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality, mirrors, headlights, heating adjustment, *ventilation, air conditioning*, interior design, overall performance, fuel consumption (petrol),

Very poor gear change, noise, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

PEUGEOT 406

from Feb 96

LARGE

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr coupé
Engines 1.8, 2.0, 2.2 or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9, 2.0, 2.1 or 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new £13,330 (1.8 L) to £26,915 (3.0 coupé auto)
Dimensions 4.55m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cam/timing belt (diesel), fuel system (diesel), engine electrics (diesel), stereo system, washers/wipers, electrical equipment/ accessories, air conditioning, heating/ventilation, gearbox/ differential, braking system

1997 to 1999 Cam/timing belt (diesel), main engine electrics (diesel), fuel system, exhaust/ emission control system (petrol), electrical equipment/accessories, cooling system, brakes

1994 to 1996 Fuel system (petrol)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)

Good Steering, stability at speed, driving seat adjustment, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, ease of loading (estate), ride quality, seat comfort, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, noise (petrol), cost of replacement parts (diesel), servicing costs (diesel)

Poor Clutch, gear change, instrument visibility, trim quality, insurance costs, overall performance (petrol), noise (diesel)

Very poor Fuel consumption (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	○
Problems	●	●	●
Faults	●	●	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	●	●	–

PEUGEOT 806

Oct 95 to Dec 01

MPV

DETAILS

Body styles MPV with 5, 6, 7 or 8 seats
Engines 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used from around £5,900
Dimensions 4.45m x 2.18m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Engine electrics, lights, electrical equipment/accessories, cooling system, gears/clutch, braking system, steering, seats/seat adjusters, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)

Good Air conditioning

Poor Steering, brakes, clutch, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, headroom in middle row, internal storage space, ride quality, noise, mirrors, interior design, overall performance (diesel)

Very poor Legroom in middle and rearmost seats, shoulder room in middle row, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, overall performance (petrol)

RELIABILITY

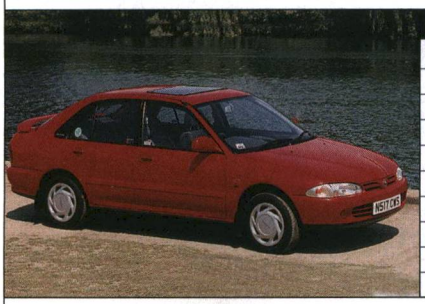
Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	●	–
Faults	–	●	–

Owners' verdicts, troubleshots and reliability data are also for the Citroën Synergie and Fiat Ulysse, which are similar to the Peugeot 806

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

PROTON PERSONA/WIRA

from Nov 93



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch
Engines 1.3, 1.5, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £7,319 (1.3 Li saloon) to £10,019 (1.6 EXi hatch)
Dimensions 4.36m x 1.97m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Electric windows, electrical equipment/accessories, rainwater seals

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Boot space (hatchback), rear view, ease of DIY, servicing costs
Good Steering, driving seat adjustment, headlights, fitting spare wheel
Poor Instrument visibility, trim quality

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

RENAULT CLIO

Mar 91 to May 98

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £5,000
Dimensions 3.71m x 1.85m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system, lights, washers/wipers, electrical equipment/accessories
1994 to 1996 Braking system, rainwater seals

OWNERS' VERDICTS

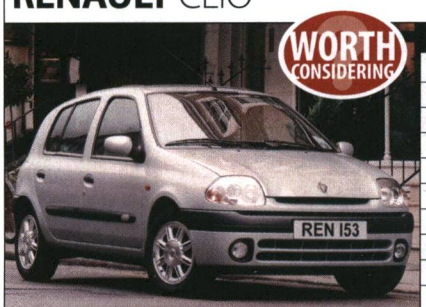
Good Boot space
Poor Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, ventilation, styling, interior design, trim quality, ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption, servicing and insurance costs
Very poor Steering, rattles and squeaks, cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	●
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	●	○

RENAULT CLIO

from May 98



DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.1, 1.4, 1.6 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.5 or 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £7,370 (1.2 3-dr) to £14,915 (2.0 Sport)
Dimensions 3.77m x 1.93m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Steering
1997 to 1999 Fuel system

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front legroom, internal storage space, boot space, ease of loading, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, view out, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating adjustment, ventilation, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel
Poor Air conditioning, cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

RENAULT ESPACE

from Apr 97

DETAILS

Body styles MPV with 5, 6 or 7 seats
Engines 2.0, 2.2 or 3.0 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new £19,170 (2.0 Authentique) to £28,420 (3.0 V6 Grand Espace)
Dimensions 4.52m x 2.07m
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Exhaust or emission control system, battery, engine electrics, electrical equipment/accessories, cooling system, braking system, airbags, carpets/upholstery, interior fittings
1997 to 1999 Rusting, cam belt/timing belt, main engine components, battery, engine electrics, cooling system, air conditioning, heating/ventilation, clutch, gearbox or differential, gears/clutch, rainwater seals, airbags, interior fittings, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of parking, internal storage space, rear view, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Instrument visibility, position of minor controls, front headroom, boot space, ease of loading, ride quality on straight, front view, windscreen wipers, styling, interior design, overall performance (diesel)
Very poor Fuel consumption (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	●	–
Problems	●	●	–
Faults	●	●	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

RENAULT LAGUNA

Apr 94 to Dec 00

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback and 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.2 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,400 to £10,000
Dimensions 4.51m x 2.04m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Main engine components, exhaust/emission control, washers/wipers, exterior trim
1997 to 1999 Cam/timing belt, main engine components, exhaust/ emission control, battery, electrics, lights, washers/wipers, electrical equipment/accessories, cooling system, air conditioning, heating/ ventilation, automatic transmission, gears/clutch, brakes, rainwater seals, airbags, seats/adjusters, interior fittings
1994 to 1996 Exhaust/emission control, cooling system, stereo system, heating/ventilation

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (dsl)
Good Boot space and ease of loading (estate), windscreen wipers
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driving seat adjustment, instruments, seat belts, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality on corners, noise, mirrors, front view, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, trim quality, rattles/ squeaks, performance, fuel consumption (petrol), cost of replacement parts and servicing (petrol)
Very poor Cost of parts (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	●
Problems	●	●	●
Faults	●	●	○

RENAULT LAGUNA

from Dec 00

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 3.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.2 litre dsl
Prices new £14,090 (1.6 Authentique) to £22,980 (3.0 Initiale estate)
Dimensions 4.58m x 2.06m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Ignition system, engine electrics, airbags

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Internal storage space, interior design, insurance costs
Good Brakes, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, rear legroom, ride quality, seat comfort, windscreen wipers, headlights, styling

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	–	–
Problems	●	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

RENAULT MÉGANE

from Apr 96 (but replaced soon)

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon, 2-dr coupé/cabrio
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £10,180 (1.4 Authentique) to £18,485 (2.0 Privilege cabriolet)
Dimensions 3.93m x 1.97m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Ignition system, engine electrics
1997 to 1999 Cylinder head/head gasket, exhaust or emission control system (petrol), ignition system (petrol), dashboard switches/control stalks, washers/wipers, braking system
1994 to 1996 Exhaust or emission control system (petrol)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

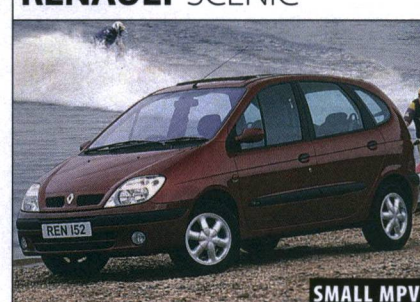
Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Brakes, boot space (saloon and hatchback), ease of loading (hatchback), styling, interior design, insurance costs, noise (petrol), fuel consumption (petrol)
Poor Stability at speed, clutch, gear change, front headroom, room in rear, internal storage space, rear view, trim quality, cost of replacement parts (petrol)
Very poor Instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, noise (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	●	●
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	●	○

RENAULT SCÉNIC

from May 97



DETAILS

Body styles MPV with 5 seats
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £12,305 (1.4 Authentique) to £17,590 (2.0 Privilege Monaco)
Dimensions 4.13m x 2.01m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Ignition system (petrol), engine electrics (petrol), automatic transmission
1997 to 1999 Fuel system, exhaust or emission control system (petrol), ignition system (petrol), washers/wipers, interior fittings, main engine components (petrol), cam/timing belt (diesel)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear leg- and headroom, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space, ease of loading and folding/ removing rear seats, fuel consumption (dsl)
Good Brakes, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, seat belts, ease of driving/parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, ride quality on straight, seats, mirrors, view out, wipers, headlights, ventilation, styling, interior design, fitting spare wheel, insurance costs, noise (petrol)
Poor Stability at speed, gear change, instruments, switches/controls, ride quality on corners, heating, fuel consumption (ptrl)
Very poor Noise (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	●	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

ROVER 100/METRO

May 90 to Oct 98

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.1 or 1.4 litre petrol, 1.4 or 1.5 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £3,500
Dimensions 3.53m x 1.78m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Alarm/immobiliser, central locking
1994 to 1996 Rust, exhaust or emission control system, central locking, automatic transmission, handles/locks, interior fittings, paintwork

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Fitting spare wheel, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs
Poor Brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving/parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, internal storage, ease of loading and folding rear seats, ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, fuel consumption
Very poor Steering, stability at speed, front legroom, room in rear, getting in and out, seat comfort, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

ROVER 200/25

from Nov 95

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.1, 1.4, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £7,850 (1.1i) to £15,510 (1.6i XL CVT)
Dimensions 3.99m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Electric windows, electrical equipment/accessories, suspension
1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system
1994 to 1996 Cylinder head/head gasket, exhaust or emission control system, ignition system, engine electrics, cooling system, seat belts, paintwork

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Steering, stability at speed, front legroom, rear leg- and shoulder room, boot space, ride quality, seat comfort, styling, interior design, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption (diesel)
Poor Clutch, gear change, ease of parking, noise, rear view, windscreen wipers, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs, fuel consumption (petrol), servicing costs (petrol)
Very poor Noise (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	○	○

ROVER 400/45

from May 95

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £9,830 (1.4 iE hatch) to £17,170 (2.0 V6 Connoisseur saloon)
Dimensions 4.32m x 1.92m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

200o to 2002 lights, electrical equipment/accessories, suspension, airbags
1997 to 1999 Cylinder head/head gasket (petrol), main engine components (petrol), lights, electric windows, electrical equipment/ accessories, cooling system (petrol), cam/timing belt (diesel), battery (diesel), engine electrics (diesel)
1994 to 1996 Cylinder head/head gasket (petrol), main engine components (petrol), exhaust or emission control system (petrol), electric windows, cooling system (petrol), paintwork

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Stability at speed, boot space and ease of loading boot (hatchback), ride quality on straight, interior design, fitting spare wheel, cost of replacement parts (petrol)
Poor Clutch, gear change, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front and rear headroom, internal storage space, noise, rear view, headlights, heating, ventilation, insurance costs, overall performance (petrol), fuel consumption (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	●	○	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

ROVER 600

Apr 93 to Oct 00

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.8, 2.0 or 2.3 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,500 to £8,100
Dimensions 4.65m x 1.90m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system, electric windows, seat belts
1994 to 1996 Lights, electric windows, electrical equipment/accessories

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel), servicing costs (diesel)
Good Styling
Poor Driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, ease of parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of loading, ride quality on corners, noise, rear view, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning,overall performance (petrol)
Very poor Rear legroom, fuel consumption (petrol)

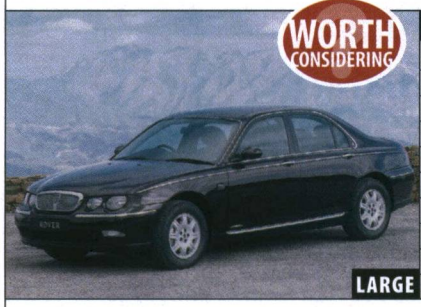
RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	★
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

ROVER 75

from Feb 99



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8, 2.0 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £16,560 (1.8 Classic) to £26,040 (2.5 Connoisseur SE estate)
Dimensions 4.75m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs very high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cam/timing belt, central locking, electrical equipment/accessories, gearbox or differential, handles/locks, carpets/upholstery, interior fittings
1997 to 1999 Main engine components, handles/locks

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Gear change, noise, ventilation, styling, interior design, insurance costs, noise (petrol), cost of replacement parts and servicing (petrol), fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space/ease of loading (saloon), ride quality, seats, mirrors, wipers, headlights, heating, air conditioning, trim quality, rattles/squeaks, performance, noise (diesel)
Poor Rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

ROVER 800

Jul 86 to Oct 99

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr coupé
Engines 2.0, 2.5 or 2.7 litre petrol, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used from around £2,300 to £8,200
Dimensions 4.88m x 1.96m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Rust, alarm/immobiliser, engine electrics, electric windows, central locking, automatic transmission, braking system
1994 to 1996 Cooling system, braking system, steering, handles/locks, seats/seat adjusters, interior

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of DIY, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good Boot space (saloon), rattles and squeaks
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, overall performance, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front and rear headroom, getting in and out, ride quality on corners, noise, rear view, heating
Very poor Gear change, noise, trim quality

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	●	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

SAAB 9000CS/CD

Oct 85 to Oct 98

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch
Engines 2.0, 2.3 or 3.0 litre petrol
Prices used around £3,700 to £9,700
Dimensions 4.62m x 1.76m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Cylinder head/head gasket, exhaust or emission control system, battery, dashboard switches/control stalks, washers/wipers, clutch, gears/clutch
1994 to 1996 Battery, engine electrics, lights, stereo system, air conditioning, clutch, gearbox or differential

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Room in rear
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, internal storage space, ride quality on corners, noise, styling, servicing costs
Very poor Ease of parking, rear view, cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	●
Problems	–	●	○
Faults	–	●	○

SAAB 9-3/900

from Oct 93 (but replaced soon)

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 2-dr convertible
Engines 2.0, 2.3 or 2.5 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new £17,065 (2.0t Eco) to £28,815 (2.0 Aero convertible)
Dimensions 4.63m x 1.95m inc mirrors
Running costs very high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Gearbox or differential
1997 to 1999 Dashboard switches/control stalks, air conditioning, heating/ventilation, airbags, seats/seat adjusters, seat belts,
1994 to 1996 Dashboard switches/control stalks, air conditioning, automatic transmission, clutch, rainwater seals, carpets/upholstery

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Brakes, instrument visibility, front headroom, boot space (hatchback), seat comfort, headlights, heating, styling, interior design, trim quality
Poor Steering, front legroom, rear head- and shoulder room, internal storage space, ease of folding rear seats, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts
Very poor Ease of parking, rear legroom, rear view, servicing costs, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	○	●
Faults	○	○	○

Reliability and troublespots are for the Saab 900 and 9-3; owners' verdicts are for the 9-3 only

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

SAAB 9-5

from Jun 97

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 2.3 or 3.0 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices new £19,815 (2.0t Linear) to £29,515 (3.0 Vector estate)
Dimensions 4.81m x 2.05m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust, gearbox or differential
1997 to 1999 Heating/ventilation

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Boot space (saloon), ease of DIY
Good Overall performance, driver's seat support, instrument visibility, front headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, ease of loading (saloon), seat comfort, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption
Poor Ease of parking, internal storage space, rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

SEAT ALHAMBRA

from Jun 96

DETAILS

Body styles MPV with 7 seats
Engines 1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £18,015 (1.8 TS) to £24,215 (2.8 Sport)
Dimensions 4.63m x 2.16m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Lights, electrical equipment/accessories, air conditioning, steering, interior fittings, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts and servicing
Good Steering, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driving position, position of minor controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, rear legroom, internal storage space, boot space, removing middle/rear seats, noise, headlights, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs
Poor Front view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

SEAT IBIZA

Oct 93 to Apr 02

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.0, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used from around £1,900
Dimensions 3.85m x 1.81m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Dashboard switches/control stalks, washers wipers, electrical equipment/accessories, clutch, handles/locks
1997 to 1999 Electrical equipment/accessories, paintwork, exhaust or emission control system
1994 to 1996 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

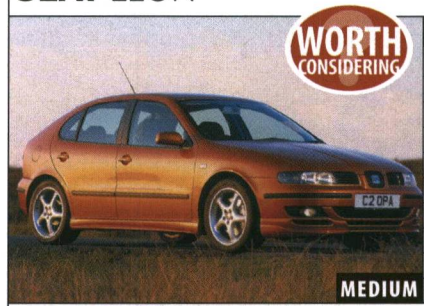
Good Rear headroom, fitting spare wheel
Poor Driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of parking, ease of loading, front view, headlights, fuel consumption, servicing costs, insurance costs
Very poor Internal storage space, rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	●	○	○
Faults	○	●	○

SEAT LEON

from Mar 00



DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.4, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £9,815 (1.4 S) to £14,815 (1.8 T Cupra)
Dimensions 4.19m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cooling system

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rattles and squeaks
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support/ adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, boot space, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, styling, trim quality
Poor Internal storage space, interior design
Very poor Ease of parking, rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

SKODA FABIA

from Mar 00

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.0, 1.4 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £7,520 (1.4 Classic) to £12,770 (1.9 Tdi Elegance estate)
Dimensions 3.96m x 1.83m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Clutch, steering, handles/locks, cylinder head/head gasket (petrol) main engine components, cooling system (petrol)

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Steering, stability at speed, gear change, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space, ease of loading, ride quality, seats, noise, wipers, headlights, ventilation, trim quality, rattles/squeaks, fitting spare wheel, noise, cost of parts and servicing (petrol), overall performance (dsl), fuel consumption (dsl)
Good Brakes, clutch, instruments, switches/controls, seat belts, ease of driving, folding rear seats, mirrors, front view, heating, air conditioning, styling, interior design, DIY, insurance costs, performance (petrol)
Poor Rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	●	–	–
Faults	●	–	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	●	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

SKODA FELICIA

May 95 to Dec 00

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.3 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used around £1,800 to £5,100
Dimensions 3.86m x 1.90m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Exhaust or emission control system, gears/clutch, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

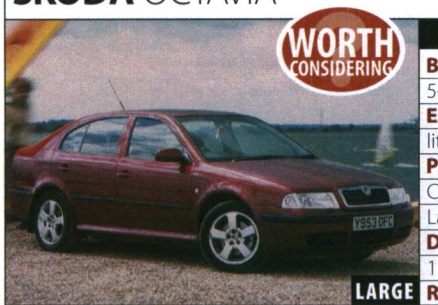
Very good Ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel, cost of replacement parts and servicing costs, insurance costs
Good Position of switches and controls, rear view, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption
Poor Stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, boot space (hatchback), ride quality, seat comfort, noise
Very poor Steering, styling, interior design

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	●	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

SKODA OCTAVIA

from Jun 98



DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £9,620 (1.4 Classic) to £17,420 (1.8T Laurin & Klement estate)
Dimensions 4.51m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Central locking
1997 to 1999 Seat belts

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of DIY, insurance costs, fuel consumption (diesel), servicing costs
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, ease of folding rear seats and loading (hatchback), ride quality on corners, mirrors, front view, headlights, styling, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, overall performance, noise (petrol)
Very poor Rear legroom

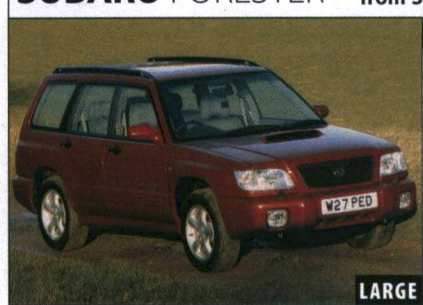
RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

SUBARU FORESTER

from Sep 97 (but replaced soon)



DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0 litre petrol
Prices new £15,315 (2.0) to £22,765 (2.0 S Turbo auto)
Dimensions 4.46m x 1.74m
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, noise, rear view
Good Steering, overall performance, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality on straight, seat comfort, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Poor Styling, servicing costs, insurance costs
Very poor Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

SUBARU IMPREZA

May 93 to Sep 00

DETAILS

Body styles 2-dr or 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol
Prices used from around £2,900 to £15,700
Dimensions 4.35m x 1.90m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Battery, clutch, gearbox or differential, gears/clutch

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Stability at speed, overall performance, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners
Good Steering, brakes, gear change, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, front leg and headroom, seat comfort, mirrors, rear view, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation
Poor Internal storage space, boot space (saloon)
Very poor Ease of DIY, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

SUBARU LEGACY

Apr 94 to Dec 98

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 2.2 or 2.5 litre petrol
Prices used around £3,500 to £9,300
Dimensions 4.60m x 1.70m

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Braking system
1994 to 1996 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear leg- and headroom, rear view
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space and ease of loading (estate), ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Poor Interior design, insurance costs
Very poor Fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	★

SUZUKI WAGON R+

from May 00

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.3 litre petrol
Prices new £7,830 (1.3 GL) to £8,605 (1.3 GL auto)
Dimensions 3.41m x 1.62m
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Heating/ventilation, interior fittings, paintwork

OWNERS' VERDICTS

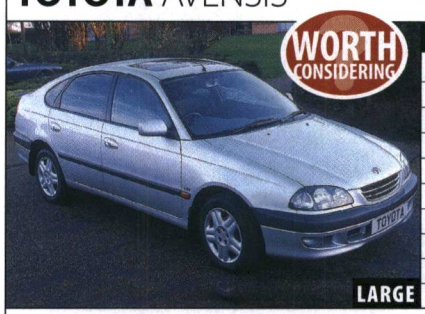
Very good Driver's seat support, driving position, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, noise, mirrors
Good Steering, brakes, overall performance, driving seat adjustment, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, seat comfort, view out, headlights, heating, ventilation, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

TOYOTA AVENSIS

from Nov 97



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £12,815 (1.6 Vermont) to £20,555 (2.0 CDX auto estate)
Dimensions 4.52m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None
1997 to 1999 Electrical equipment/accessories, clutch, steering, exterior

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear legroom, internal storage space, ease of DIY, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Good Steering, front legroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space (hatchback and saloon), ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), ride quality on straight, seat comfort, noise, headlights, heating, ventilation, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, servicing costs
Poor Front headroom, ease of folding rear seats and loading (estate), interior design
Very poor Ease of parking, rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

TOYOTA CARINA E

May 92 to Nov 97

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,400 to £5,500
Dimensions 4.53m x 1.89m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Cam/timing belt, alarm/immobiliser, air conditioning, gears/clutch, braking system, steering
1994 to 1996 Electric windows

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear legroom, boot space (saloon), ease of DIY
Good Rear shoulder room, boot space (hatchback), fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, position of switches and controls, driving pleasure, front headroom, ride quality, noise, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design
Very poor Ease of parking, rear view, cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	★
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	★

TOYOTA CELICA

from Oct 99

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr coupé
Engines 1.8 litre petrol
Prices new £16,815 (1.8) to £23,315 (1.8 T Sport)
Dimensions 4.35m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Internal storage space, boot space, ease of loading, fuel consumption
Good Stability at speed, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, front legroom, ride quality on straight, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

TOYOTA COROLLA

Aug 92 to May 97

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.3, 1.6 or 1.8 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,500 to £5,500
Dimensions 4.27m x 1.87m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Airbags, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of DIY
Good Steering, clutch, gear change, overall performance, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, boot space and ease of loading (hatchback), heating, trim quality
Poor Getting in and out, noise, insurance costs
Very poor Rear legroom, cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	★
Problems	–	–	★
Faults	–	–	★

TOYOTA COROLLA

Jun 97 to Dec 01

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.3, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices used around £3,900 to £9,300
Dimensions 4.29m x 1.87m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None
1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Noise, rattles and squeaks
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, boot space and ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, trim quality, ease of DIY, fuel consumption
Poor Front headroom, rear leg- and shoulder room, getting in and out, rear view, styling, interior design, cost of replacement parts
Very poor Rear headroom

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	★	–
Problems	○	★	–
Faults	○	★	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

TOYOTA PICNIC

Jan 97 to Sep 01

DETAILS

Body styles MPV with 6 or 7 seats
Engines 2.0 litre petrol, 2.2 litre diesel
Prices used around £6,800 to £11,600
Dimensions 4.53m x 1.96m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

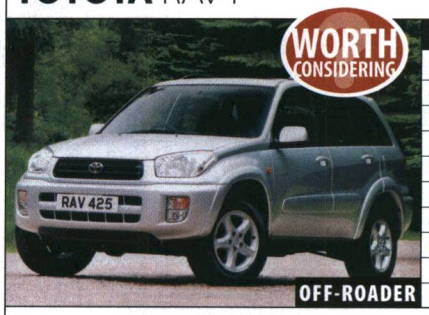
Very good Trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, cost of replacement parts and insurance
Good Brakes, overall performance, noise, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, fuel consumption, servicing costs
Very poor Boot space, ease of loading

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	★	–
Faults	–	★	–

TOYOTA RAV4

from Aug 00



DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr off-roader
Engines 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 2.0 diesel
Prices new £13,315 (1.8 NV) to £20,515 (2.0 VX auto)
Dimensions 3.81m x 1.74m
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None
1997 to 1999 None
1994 to 1996 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Stability at speed, ease of parking, noise, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, fuel consumption, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good Steering, brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, driving position, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, driving pleasure, getting in and out, ride quality, seat comfort, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design
Poor Rear shoulder room, ease of loading
Very poor Rear legroom, boot space

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	★	★	★
Faults	★	★	★

Reliability and troublespots are for the old-shape RAV4 as well as the current model

TOYOTA STARLET

Mar 96 to Jul 99

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.3 litre petrol
Prices used around £2,900 to £5,600
Dimensions 3.74m x 1.83m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Seat belts

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Steering, overall performance, ease of parking, mirrors, rear view, windscreen wipers, ventilation, ease of DIY, fitting spare wheel
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driving seat adjustment, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, ease of loading, ride quality, noise, front view, headlights, heating, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, insurance costs
Poor Cost of replacement parts
Very poor Rear legroom

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	★	–
Problems	–	★	–
Faults	–	★	–

TOYOTA YARIS

from Mar 99

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.0, 1.3 or 1.5 litre petrol, 1.4 litre diesel
Prices new £6,870 (1.0S VVT-i) to £11,850 (1.5T Sport VVT-i)
Dimensions 3.61m x 1.88m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None
1997 to 1999 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Steering, brakes, performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instruments, switches/controls, driving pleasure, front headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage, ride quality on corners, seats, noise, wipers, ventilation, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles/ squeaks, DIY, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption, insurance costs
Good Stability at speed, clutch, gear change, adjusting driving seat, seat belts, ease of driving/parking, front legroom, folding rear seats/loading, ride quality on straight, mirrors, front view, headlights, heating, air conditioning, parts/servicing costs
Poor Rear view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	★	○	–
Problems	★	★	–
Faults	★	★	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

TOYOTA YARIS VERSO

from Jan 00

SUPERMINI

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr estate/mini-MPV
Engines 1.3 litre petrol, 1.4 litre diesel
Prices new £10,550 (1.3 GS) to £12,260 (1.4 D-4D GLS)
Dimensions 3.86m x 1.92m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 None

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Steering, brakes, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, internal storage space, removing rear seats, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, rear view, windscreen wipers, headlights, ventilation, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Good Stability at speed, driving seat adjustment, position of switches and controls, ease of driving, ride quality on straight, front view, heating, interior design, fuel consumption
Very poor Styling

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	★	–	–
Faults	★	–	–

VAUXHALL ASTRA

Oct 91 to Aug 98

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr convertible
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.7 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,000 to £6,100
Dimensions 4.06m x 1.86m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Central locking, stereo system, washers/wipers, heating/ventilation, brakes, rainwater seals, handles/locks, paintwork; petrol: main engine components, cam/timing belt, exhaust/emission control
1994 to 1996 Cylinder head/head gasket, switches/control stalks, lights, paintwork, electrical equipment/accessories, washers/ wipers, suspension; petrol: cam/timing belt, main engine components, exhaust/emission control, electrics; diesel: battery, cooling system

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of parts, servicing costs and fuel consumption(diesel)
Good Boot space (hatch/estate), cost of insurance, cost of servicing (petrol)
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, switches/controls, seat belts, ease of driving, front leg/headroom, rear head/shoulder room, getting in and out, ride, seats, mirrors, front view, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, rattles/squeaks; petrol: noise, performance, fuel consumption
Very poor Diesel: overall performance, noise

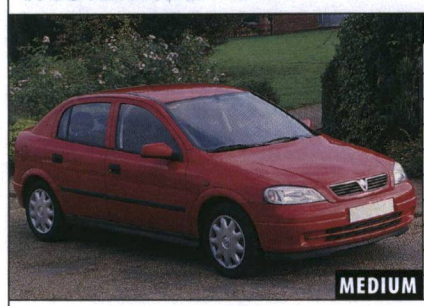
RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	●	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	●
Problems	–	–	●
Faults	–	–	●

VAUXHALL ASTRA

from Feb 98



MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatch, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr est, 2-dr coupé or convertible
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.2 litre petrol, 1.7 or 2.0 dsl
Prices new £10,115 (1.6i) to £20,815 (2.0 coupé)
Dimensions 4.11m x 1.98m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cylinder head/head gasket (diesel), cooling system (diesel)
1997 to 1999 Cam/timing belt (diesel), main engine components (diesel), fuel system (diesel), alarm/immobiliser (petrol), ignition system, engine electrics, dashboard switches/control stalks, lights, electrical equipment/accessories

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of replacement parts, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, boot space (hatchback), ease of loading (estate), noise, headlights, heating, ventilation, fitting spare wheel, insurance costs, servicing costs
Poor Driving position, front legroom, getting in and out, ease of folding rear seats (hatchback), mirrors, view out, windscreen wipers, trim quality, fuel consumption (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	★	●	–
Faults	★	○	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	–
Problems	○	●	–
Faults	○	●	–

VAUXHALL CORSA

Apr 93 to Oct 00

SUPERMINI

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.0, 1.2, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.5 or 1.7 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,100 to £6,300
Dimensions 3.73m x 1.76m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Lights, seat belts
1997 to 1999 Rust, cylinder head/head gasket, cam/timing belt, exhaust or emission control system (petrol), electrical equipment/accessories, cooling system (petrol), seat/seat adjusters, seat belts
1994 to 1996 Engine electrics (diesel), dashboard switches/control stalks, seats/seat adjusters, exterior trim

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Fitting spare wheel, cost of replacement parts (petrol)
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving/parking, front leg- and headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space, folding rear seats, ride quality, seats, noise, mirrors, front view, wipers, lights, heating, ventilation, rattles and squeaks, performance, fuel consumption (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	●	○
Problems	○	○	○
Faults	○	○	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	●
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

VAUXHALL CORSA

from Oct 00

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback
Engines 1.0, 1.2, 1.4 or 1.8 litre petrol, 1.7 litre diesel
Prices new £6,870 (1.0 Expression) to £13,315 (1.8 SRi)
Dimensions 3.82m x 1.96m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Washers/wipers

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear legroom, fitting spare wheel, cost of replacements parts, servicing costs, insurance costs
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support and adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, internal storage space, ease of loading boot, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, quality of trim, rattles and squeaks, ease of DIY, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

VAUXHALL OMEGA

from Apr 94

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0 to 3.2 litre petrol, 2.0 litre LPG, 2.0, 2.2 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new £18,015 (2.2/2.6 GLS) to £30,515 (3.2 Elite est)
Dimensions 4.79m x 1.97m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Main engine components, fuel system, engine electrics, dashboard switches/control stalks, lights, central locking, electrical equipment/accessories, suspension, handles/locks, exterior trim
1994 to 1996 Cam/timing belt, engine electrics, dashboard switches/control stalks, air conditioning, heating/ventilation, suspension

OWNERS' VERDICTS

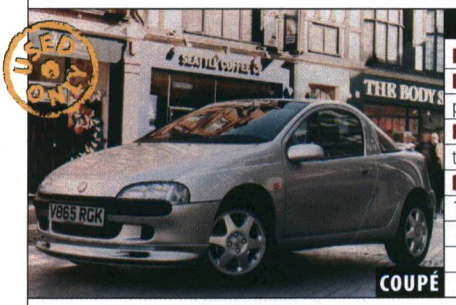
Very good Cost of parts and servicing
Good Rear legroom, boot space, insurance costs
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, getting in and out, internal storage space, ease of folding rear seats (estate), ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, view out, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption
Very poor Headlights, trim quality

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	●	○
Faults	○	●	○

VAUXHALL TIGRA

Nov 94 to Jun 01



DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr coupé
Engines 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol
Prices used around £3,800 to £9,200
Dimensions 3.92m x 1.81m

TROUBLESPOTS

Too few members reporting, but Vauxhalls overall are poor for reliability

OWNERS' VERDICTS

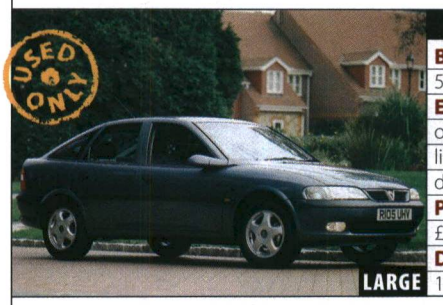
Very good Ventilation, styling
Good Driving pleasure, headlights, heating, interior design, trim quality
Very poor Seat belt comfort, ease of parking, front headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, rear view, insurance costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	–
Problems	–	–	–
Faults	–	–	–

VAUXHALL VECTRA

Oct 95 to Jun 02



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr hatch, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0. 2.2, 2.5 or 2.6 litre petrol, 1.8 or 2.0 litre LPG, 1.7, 2.0 or 2.2 litre diesel
Prices used from around £3,000
Dimensions 4.48m x 1.85m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Lights, electrical equipment, suspension, airbags
1997 to 1999 Rust, fuel system, engine electrics, switches/stalks, lights, electrical equipment/accessories, air conditioning, steering, paintwork; petrol: cam/timing belt, main engine components, exhaust/emission control, ignition system
1994 to 1996 Central locking, electrical equipment, gearbox/differential, rainwater seals; petrol: cam/timing belt, main engine components, electrics

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Cost of parts; diesel: fuel consumption, servicing costs
Good Boot space (saloon), servicing costs (petrol)
Poor Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat, driving position, instruments, switches/controls, seat belts, ease of driving, driving pleasure, room front and rear, getting in and out, internal storage, ease of loading (hatch), folding rear seats, ride quality, seats, noise, view out, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, trim quality, DIY; petrol: performance, fuel consumption, styling
Very poor Mirrors, rattles and squeaks

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	○
Problems	○	●	●
Faults	○	●	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	●	–
Problems	–	●	–
Faults	–	●	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA

from May 99

DETAILS

Body styles small MPV with 7 seats
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.2 litre petrol, 2.0 litre diesel
Prices new £13,815 (1.6 Club) to £19,815 (2.0 GSi)
Dimensions 4.32m x 2.00m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Alarm/immobiliser, seats/seat adjusters, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear leg- and headroom, removing rear seats, cost of replacement parts and servicing (petrol)
Good Instrument visibility, front headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage space, noise, rear view, insurance costs
Poor Ease of parking, ride quality on corners, windscreen wipers, trim quality, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor Front view

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

VOLVO 440/460

Dec 88 to Jun 97

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £3,000
Dimensions 4.32m x 1.89m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Automatic transmission, airbags, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

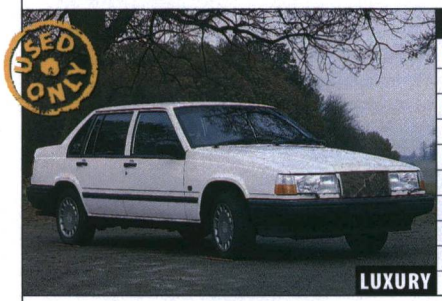
Poor Brakes, clutch, gear change, overall performance, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, front headroom, getting in and out, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality on corners, noise, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks
Very poor Boot space (hatchback), cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

VOLVO 940

Sep 90 to Dec 97



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0 or 2.3 litre petrol, 2.4 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £9,200
Dimensions 4.88m x 1.99m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Exhaust or emission control system, dashboard switches/control stalks, seats/seat adjusters

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Ease of parking, internal storage space, ease of DIY
Good Boot space (estate), ease of folding rear seats and loading (estate), rear view
Poor Stability at speed, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, driving pleasure, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, noise
Very poor Styling, interior design, fuel consumption, cost of replacement parts

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

VOLVO S40/V40

from Mar 96

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon (S40), 5-dr estate (V40)
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 1.9 or 2.0 litre petrol, 1.8 LPG, 1.9 dsl
Prices new £14,315 (S40 1.6 S) to £21,165 (V40 2.0 T4 Sport Lux)
Dimensions 4.49m x 1.90m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cylinder head/head gasket, automatic transmission, gearbox or differential, braking system, paintwork
1997 to 1999 Lights, electrical equipment/accessories, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Good Driver's seat support, mirrors, windscreen wipers, ventilation, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Poor Overall performance, instrument visibility, front leg- and headroom, rear leg- and shoulder room, ease of loading (saloon), ride quality, front view, fuel consumption
Very poor Boot space and ease of loading (estate), cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

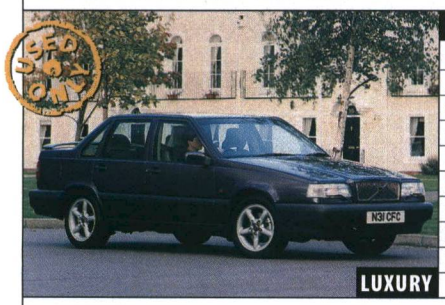
RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	○	–
Problems	○	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

VOLVO S70/V70/850

Jun 92 to Sep 00



DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 2.0, 2.3, 2.4 litre petrol, 2.4 litre LPG or CNG, 2.5 litre diesel
Prices used around £4,500 to £18,200
Dimensions 4.72m x 2.03m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Battery (petrol), lights, electric windows, electrical equipment/accessories, air conditioning, heating/ventilation, braking system
1994 to 1996 Electrical equipment/accessories, air conditioning, heating/ventilation

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Driver's seat support, leg- and headroom front and rear, internal storage space, boot space and ease of folding rear seats (estate), rear view, ease of DIY, insurance costs
Poor Steering, brakes, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, driving pleasure, ride quality, noise, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, overall performance (petrol), fuel consumption (petrol),
Very poor Cost of replacement parts and servicing (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	●	○
Faults	–	●	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	○	–
Faults	–	○	–

VOLVO V70

from Jan 00

DETAILS

Body styles 5-dr estate
Engines 2.3, 2.4 litre petrol, 2.4 litre bi-fuel, 2.4 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new £20,320 (2.4 Torslander) to £31,830 (2.4 SE Cross Country)
Dimensions 4.72m x 2.03m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Alarm/immobiliser, lights, central locking, electrical equipment/accessories, rainwater seals

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Insurance costs
Good Driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, headroom front and rear, getting in and out, boot space (estate), seat comfort, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, air conditioning, interior design
Poor Ease of parking

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	●	–	–
Faults	●	–	–

VOLVO S80

from Mar 98

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 2.4, 2.8 or 2.9 litre petrol, 2.4 litre bi-fuel, 2.4 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new £20,460 (2.4 S) to £39,536 (2.9 T6 Exec)
Dimensions 4.83m x 2.10m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Rust, suspension

OWNERS' VERDICTS

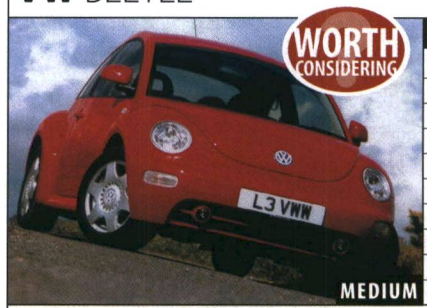
Good Brakes, driver's seat support, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, front leg- and headroom, room in rear, getting in and out, internal storage space, boot space, ride quality on corners, seat comfort, windscreen wipers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, fuel consumption

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

VW BEETLE

from Jan 00



DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr hatchback
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.3 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £11,830 (1.6) to £17,930 (2.3 V5 Sport)
Dimensions 4.09m x 1.84m inc mirrors
Running costs low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Electric windows, central locking, suspension, handles/locks, paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Driver's seat support, noise, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, overall performance, driving seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, ride quality on corners, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation
Poor Fuel consumption
Very poor Room in rear

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

VW BORA

from Feb 99

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon
Engines 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £13,030 (1.6 S) to £20,120 (2.8 V6)
Dimensions 4.38m x 2.02m inc mirrors
Running costs high

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Fuel system

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Trim quality, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front headroom, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, overall performance (diesel)
Poor Rear legroom, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor Cost of parts (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

VW GOLF/VENTO

Feb 92 to Feb 98

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate, 2-dr cabriolet
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,700 to £9,900
Dimensions 4.02m x 1.89m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Alarm immobiliser (petrol), paintwork
1994 to 1996 Rust, electric windows, stereo system

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Trim quality
Poor Steering, clutch, driver's seat adjustment, driving position, instrument visibility, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, room front and rear, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space (hatch), ease of folding rear seats and loading (hatch), ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, wipers, headlights, heating, ventilation, styling, interior design, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption (petrol), servicing costs (diesel)
Very poor Brakes, insurance costs, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs (petrol)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	○
Problems	–	○	○
Faults	–	○	○

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	○
Faults	–	–	○

VW GOLF

from Nov 97

MEDIUM

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 5-dr estate, 2-dr cabriolet
Engines 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.3 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre dsl
Prices new £10,730 (1.4 E) to £20,610 (2.0 cabriolet)
Dimensions 4.15m x 2.02m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Cam/timing belt (diesel), alarm immobiliser (diesel), dashboard switches/control stalks, electrical equipment/accessories
1997 to 1999 Electric windows, handles/locks

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Trim quality, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Steering, stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, instruments, switches/controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front headroom, getting in and out, internal storage, ease of loading (hatchback), ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, view out, wipers, headlights, heating, styling, interior design, rattles/squeaks, fitting spare wheel, performance
Poor Rear legroom, insurance costs, fuel consumption (ptrl), servicing costs (ptrl)
Very poor Cost of parts, servicing costs (dsl)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	●	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	●	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

VW LUPO

from Feb 99

SUPERMINI

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr hatchback
Engines 1.0, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.4 or 1.7 litre diesel
Prices new £7,315 (1.0 E) to £12,815 (1.6 GTi)
Dimensions 3.53m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs very low

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Engine electrics, electric windows, carpets/upholstery, interior fittings

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks
Good Steering, clutch, overall performance, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, position of switches and controls, seat belt comfort, ease of driving and parking, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, getting in and out, ride quality, seat comfort, view out, windscreen wipers, heating
Very poor Internal storage space, boot space, cost of replacement parts and servicing

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	–	–
Problems	○	–	–
Faults	○	–	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

VW PASSAT

Apr 88 to Apr 97

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.6 or 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used up to around £5,000
Dimensions 4.68m x 1.96m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

1994 to 1996 Ignition system, electric windows, electrical equipment/accessories, air conditioning, heating/ventilation

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear leg- and headroom, fuel consumption
Good Front legroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, boot space and ease of loading (estate), rear view, fitting spare wheel
Poor Steering, overall performance, ease of driving, driving pleasure, ride quality, seat comfort, heating, styling
Very poor Brakes, noise, fresh air ventilation, interior design

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	–	○
Problems	–	–	●
Faults	–	–	○

VW PASSAT

from Feb 97

DETAILS

Body styles 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.8, 2.0, 2.3, 2.8 or 4.0 litre petrol, 1.9 or 2.5 litre diesel
Prices new £14,670 (2.0 S) to £32,150 (W8 auto estate)
Dimensions 4.68m x 1.91m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Central locking, electrical equipment/accessories, air conditioning, seat belts
1997 to 1999 Cam/timing belt, main engine components, heating/ventilation, central locking, suspension, handles/locks

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Rear leg- and headroom, fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Stability at speed, brakes, clutch, gear change, driver's seat support, instruments, switches and controls, seat belts, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear shoulder room, getting in and out, internal storage, boot space and ease of loading, ride quality, noise, mirrors, rear view, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, styling, interior design, trim quality, rattles and squeaks, overall performance
Poor Ease of folding rear seats (estate), fuel consumption (petrol), cost of parts, servicing costs (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	●	○	–
Faults	○	○	–

Diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	○	○	–
Problems	●	●	–
Faults	●	○	–

VW POLO

Sep 94 to Jan 02

DETAILS

Body styles 3-dr or 5-dr hatchback, 4-dr saloon, 5-dr estate
Engines 1.0, 1.4 or 1.6 litre petrol, 1.4 or 1.9 litre diesel
Prices used around £2,600 to £10,000
Dimensions 3.74m x 1.83m inc mirrors

TROUBLESPOTS

2000 to 2002 Ignition system, engine electrics, electric windows, rainwater seals
1997 to 1999 Electric windows, ignition system, carpets/upholstery, paintwork
1994 to 1996 Paint losing shine

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Trim quality
Good Steering, stability at speed, clutch, driver's seat support/adjustment, driving position, seat belt comfort, ease of driving, driving pleasure, front leg- and headroom, rear head- and shoulder room, boot space, ride quality, seat comfort, noise, mirrors, front view, windscreen wipers, heating, styling, interior design, rattles and squeaks, overall performance (petrol), fuel consumption (diesel)
Poor Ease of loading, fuel consumption (petrol)
Very poor Insurance costs, cost of replacement parts, servicing costs

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	●	○	★
Problems	●	○	★
Faults	○	★	○

VW SHARAN

from Aug 95

DETAILS

Body styles MPV with 5, 6 or 7 seats
Engines 1.8, 2.0 or 2.8 litre petrol, 1.9 litre diesel
Prices new £18,215 (2.0 SL) to £26,525 (2.8 Carat 4Motion)
Dimensions 4.62m x 2.15m inc mirrors
Running costs average

TROUBLESPOTS

1997 to 1999 Air conditioning, heating/ventilation, dashboard switches/control stalks, lights, electrical equipment/accessories, steering

OWNERS' VERDICTS

Very good Fuel consumption (diesel)
Good Gear change, rattles and squeaks, noise (petrol)
Poor Instrument visibility, position of minor controls, internal storage space, view out, windscreen wipers
Very poor Ease of parking, removing middle/rear seats, fitting spare wheel, fuel consumption (petrol), cost of replacement parts (petrol), servicing costs, noise (diesel)

RELIABILITY

Petrol/diesel	00 - 02	97 - 99	94 - 96
Breakdowns	–	○	–
Problems	–	●	–
Faults	–	●	–

KEY ★ better than average ○ average ● worse than average

CONTACTS

MANUFACTURERS

Alfa Romeo
0800 718 000
www.alfaromeo.co.uk
Audi
0800 699 888
www.audi.co.uk
BMW
0800 325 600
www.bmw.co.uk
Chrysler/Jeep
0800 616 159
www.chryslerjeep.co.uk
Citroën
0870 606 9000
www.citroen.co.uk
Daewoo
0800 050 607
www.daewoo-cars.co.uk
Daihatsu
0121 520 5000
www.daihatsu.co.uk
Fiat
0800 717 000
www.fiat.co.uk
Ford
08457 111 888
www.ford.co.uk
Honda
0845 200 8000
www.honda.co.uk
Hyundai
01494 428 600
www.hyundai-car.co.uk
Jaguar
0845 303 2303
www.jaguar.com/uk
Kia
01892 513454
www.kia.co.uk
Land Rover
08705 000500
www.landrover.com
Lexus
0845 278 8888
www.lexus.co.uk
Mazda
0845 601 3147
www.mazda.co.uk
Mercedes-Benz
00800 1777 7777
www.mercedes-benz.co.uk
MG Rover
08459 251 251 (MG)
08457 186 186 (Rover)
www.mg-rover.com
Mini
01344 480880
www.mini.co.uk
Mitsubishi
01285 647 774
www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk
Nissan
01923 899 334
www.nissan.co.uk
Perodua
020 8961 1255
www.perodua-uk.com
Peugeot
0845 200 1234
www.peugeot.co.uk
Proton
08000 521 521
www.proton.co.uk
Renault
0800 52 51 50
www.renault.co.uk
Saab
0800 626 556
www.saab.co.uk
Seat
0500 222 222
www.seat.co.uk
Skoda
0845 774 5745
www.skoda.co.uk
Smart
0800 037 9966
www.smart.com
Subaru
0121 557 2112
www.subaru.co.uk
Suzuki
01892 707007
www.suzuki.co.uk
Toyota
0845 275 5555
www.toyota.co.uk
Vauxhall
0845 600 1500
www.vauxhall.co.uk
Volvo
08457 564 636
www.volvocars.co.uk
VW
0800 333 666
www.volkswagen.co.uk

BUYING NEW

The importers, brokers and supermarkets listed are only a sample of the many around the country and on the internet. Their listing does not constitute our endorsement.

■ **IMPORTING AND IMPORTERS**
www.4circle.co.uk
www.importanewcar.co.uk
Car seekers
0870 889 0232
www.carseekers.co.uk
OneSwoop
0845 330 8535
www.oneswoop.com
Virgin Cars
0845 270 0985
www.virgincars.com

■ **BROKERS**
Autobytel
0800 783 1514
www.autobytel.co.uk
Jam Jar
0845 129 5252 (imports)
0845 608 1133 (UK cars)
www.jamjar.com
The *Daily Telegraph's* motoring website lists more, at www.honestjohn.co.uk

■ **CAR SUPERMARKETS**
www.car-supermarkets.com (for lists of car supermarkets in your area)

BUYING USED

■ **GENERAL ADVICE**
Office of Fair Trading
www.oft.gov.uk/Consumer
Vehicle Inspectorate MOT hotline
0845 600 5977
www.via.gov.uk

■ **AUCTIONS**
Society of Motor Auctions
01788 538301

■ **USED CAR PRICE GUIDES**
www.parkers.co.uk
www.whatcar.co.uk

■ **INTERNET CLASSIFIEDS**
www.autotrader.co.uk
www.carseller.co.uk
www.exchangeandmart.co.uk
www.fish4cars.co.uk
www.loot.co.uk

■ **HISTORY CHECKS AND CAR INSPECTIONS**
AA 0800 234 999 (data check)
0800 085 3007 (inspections)
www.theaa.com
Automobile Buyers Services
0800 3585855
www.findit.co.uk/abs
DVLA Vehicle Check Service
0906 185 8585 (49p/min)
HPI 01722 422422
www.hpicheck.com
RAC 0870 533 3660
www.rac.co.uk
What Car? History Check
0845 601 0804
www.whatcar.co.uk

GREENER MOTORING

PowerShift
www.est-powershift.org.uk
The Vehicle Certification Agency
www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk to find the CO_2 emissions for most models of new cars
Travel Calculator
www.travelcalculator.org to work out how much CO_2 you produce in daily life

RUNNING COSTS

■ **TAX BANDS**
www.dvla.gov.uk/vehicles/taxation.htm

■ **RUNNING COST FIGURES**
The Which? Online running costs database
http://sub.which.net/crc/content/search.html

RECALLS

The number of cars recalled in the UK has gone up by 150,000 within a year, and now stands at 1,528,395. This figure sounds alarming and, of course, manufacturers should ideally get their products right before they go on sale. But the complexity of modern cars means this won't always happen, and it is better that a manufacturer recalls a car to fix a problem than ignores it.

There are two key ways makers are encouraged to recall cars. The first is the voluntary code of practice under which car manufacturers or importers tell the Vehicle Inspectorate (VI) if they discover a safety-related defect in one of their models. The VI works closely with other government and trade bodies to administer recalls, giving manufacturers access to vehicle registration records and publishing updates of recalls.

The second way manufacturers are prompted to recall cars is because of the increasing likelihood of litigation against anyone found ignoring known problems. This should be strengthened in 2004 when new UK General Product Safety Regulations come into force. These regulations aren't just for cars, but they should reinforce the need for manufacturers to recall and rectify problems promptly.

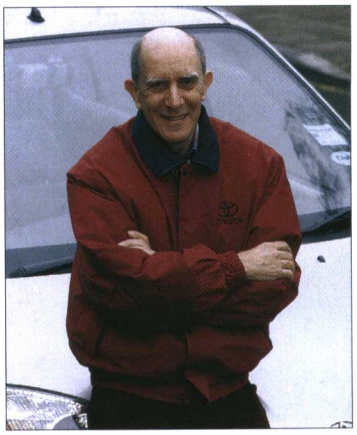
Issuing a recall is one thing, but ensuring that all affected models are fixed is another. It's estimated that up to 260,000 cars a year that are subject to recalls get missed – perhaps when the car changes owners, or if the owner moves house.

Check the list, opposite, for the major recalls of 2001. For more details, or to find out about more recent recalls, try the VI website at www.via.gov.uk (or call 0117 954 3300). The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders has a Recall Information Point on 020 7235 7000, or try the AA's site, which allows you to search by make and model, at www.theaa.co.uk/motoringandtravel/carrecall.

MAKE AND MODEL	BUILD DATES	POSSIBLE PROBLEM
Audi A2	Jan 00 to Dec 00	Electrical short circuit & fire (in crash situation)
Audi A3, S3 and TT	Feb 97 to Feb 00	Rear axle ball joints may seize
BMW 3-series	Jan 91 to Dec 98	Lower steering shaft may fail if corroded
BMW 3-series (E46 range)	Feb 01 to May 01	Cooling fan could overheat and catch fire
BMW 5-series, 7-series, Z8 and X5	Nov 00 to Sep 01	Cooling fan could overheat and catch fire
BMW X5	Sep 00 to Jan 01	Incorrect assembly of steering mechanism
BMW Mini One and Cooper	Aug 01	Static electricity could ignite fuel vapour
Chrysler Voyager	Aug 97 to Aug 00	Handbrake may fail
Citroën Saxo	Jan 01	Brake pedal may fail under heavy braking
Citroën Xantia 1.8i 16v	Jan 95 to Dec 96	Cam belt may break unexpectedly
Daewoo Nubira 2.0	1998 to 2000	Possible fuel leak from filter
Daihatsu Sirion and Cuore	Jan 98 to Dec 99	Headlight and horn wiring circuits may fail
Fiat Punto	Jan 93 to Dec 96	Brakes may corrode and fail
Fiat Punto	Jan 94 to Dec 95	Airbags may deploy unexpectedly
Fiat Punto	Feb 01 to May 01	Steering column bearing may be cracked
Fiat Seicento	Jan 98 to Dec 99	Chafing of front brake pipes
Ford Explorer	Jan 95 to Oct 96	Front stabiliser bars may break
Ford Galaxy with air conditioning	Jan 94 to Nov 99	Chafing of fuel lines – possible leak
Ford Mondeo and Cougar	Nov 99 to May 00	Parking brake ratchet could fail
Ford Mondeo	Jun 00 to Jul 00	Side airbags could activate unexpectedly
Ford Mondeo	Oct 00 to Jul 01	Speed control unit could corrode and seize
Honda Civic 5-dr	Dec 00	Fuel filler tube may be insecure and leak fuel
Honda Civic 5-dr	Nov 00 to Apr 01	Brake pedal pin may be incorrectly installed
Land Rover Freelander	Oct 97 to Feb 01	Faulty hand brake ratchet – vehicle could roll away
Land Rover Freelander	Aug 00 to Nov 00	Underbonnet engine wiring harness may chafe
Land Rover Range Rover and Discovery V8	Jan 98 to Dec 00	Park/lock mechanism may not operate (auto)
Land Rover Range Rover and Discovery V8	Jan 98 to Dec 00	ACE hose may fracture and leak fluid
Mazda 626 diesel	Sep 98 to Aug 99	Cam belt may break and stop engine suddenly
Mercedes-Benz A-class	Sep 00 to Jan 01	Brake master cylinder may malfunction
Mercedes-Benz C-class (202 series)	Jan 93 to Dec 96	Rear exhaust pipe could break releasing hot gases
Mercedes-Benz C-, E- and S-class, and SL	Sep 95 to Dec 96	Airbag may deploy unexpectedly
Mini (old shape)	Aug 96 to Jan 99	Wheel bearings could corrode and fail
Mitsubishi Galant	Jan 93 to Dec 96	Suspension ball joint may wear prematurely
Mitsubishi Spacewagon and Space Runner	Jan 98 to Dec 01	Cracks in fuel tank and check valve
Peugeot 106	not stated	Brake lever may fracture
Peugeot 206	not stated	Stub axle may separate from front suspension
Peugeot 306	not stated	LH drive shaft could separate from gearbox
Peugeot 306	not stated	Seat belt pre-tensioner may fail
Peugeot 306 and 406	Dec 1996	Cam belt may fail prematurely
Peugeot 406	not stated	Rear suspension bolts could cause wheels to lock
Proton All models	not stated	Starter motor may operate independently
Renault Clio	Jan 98 to Dec 99	Accelerator cable may break
Renault Espace	Jul 00 to Sep 00	Rear brake calliper could come loose
Renault Kangoo	Apr 00 to Jul 00	Defective tyres to may lose pressure quickly
Renault Mégane and Scénic diesel	not stated	Leakage from high pressure diesel pipes
Renault Mégane coupé and cabriolet	Sep 99 to Feb 01	Four recalls for engine and fuel system problems
Saab 900 and CV	Jan 97 to Dec 98	Passenger airbag may deploy unintentionally
Suzuki Jimny estate and soft top	Apr 98 to Oct 99	Gearbox selector bolt may loosen and fall out
Toyota Yaris	not stated	Rear wheel hub bolts may become loose
Vauxhall Corsa, Tigra and Combo	Jan 93 to Dec 99	Front seat rails may fracture
Vauxhall Corsa, Tigra and Combo	Jan 99 to Dec 00	Defective front seat belt latches
Vauxhall Zafira	Jan 00 to Dec 01	Possible leak from fuel pipe
VW Golf estate	May 00 to Jun 00	Faulty welding on ISOFIX child seat mountings
VW Golf and Bora	Oct 00 to Nov 00	Passenger airbag may malfunction

55%

OF NEW CAR BUYERS WERE VERY SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICE THEY GOT FROM THE DEALER THEY BOUGHT FROM



JOE SHEEHAN

"Wherever we go, it creates an incredible amount of attention. People come out and look at it and they want to see how it works and to be shown everything about it."
Howard Fisher on his Toyota Prius

JOHN TRENHOLM

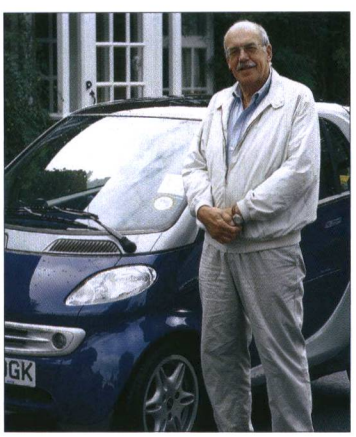
20%

OF SIX- TO EIGHT-TO-YEAR OLD CARS BROKE DOWN AT LEAST ONCE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

"It looks good, it's got comfort, it's got space. The controls and everything are nicely styled."
Sue Freestone on her Vauxhall Corsa

63%

OF PEOPLE WOULD RECOMMEND THEIR CAR TO A FRIEND



JOHN TRENHOLM

"It brings a certain amount of fun back to everyday motoring. It's a very compact, efficient package of a car, and an awful lot has been put into that very small cabin."
David Hutchings on his MCC Smart

34%

OF CARS UP TO TWO YEARS OLD NEEDED ONE OR MORE PARTS REPLACED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS